

# ETIQUETTE & ENTERTAINING



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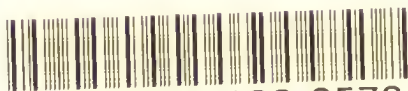
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# Etiquette and Entertaining

# APPEARANCES

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a Limited Income

BY

MRS ALFRED PRAGA

*Author of "Starting Housekeeping,"  
"Dinners of the Day," etc.*

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# ETIQUETTE AND ENTERTAINING

By

Mrs L. Heaton Armstrong

Author of

“Etiquette for Girls,” “The Etiquette of Parties,”

“Good Form,” “Letters to a Bride,” etc.



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# ETIQUETTE AND ENTERTAINING

## CARDS

MANY of the rules of etiquette are like the laws of the Medes and Persians, fixed and unalterable, but the fashions in visiting-cards alter slightly from year to year. Society women introduce little changes from time to time—shibboleths by which they may recognise the elect. The fashion of “At home” days has effected quite a revolution in the customs of card-leaving, and it is now correct to leave cards on paying a first call, whether the hostess is at home or not. Some years ago this would have been considered quite an improper proceeding, but common sense shows us that leaving the visiting-card is the only way of showing the hostess when she can return the call.

Visiting-cards are more often sent by post than was formerly considered correct, and the neophyte is often puzzled as to when this is permissible and when it is not. It is never allowable after entertainments: putting a visiting-card into an envelope and posting it can never form a substitute for paying a call. The hostess has had plenty of trouble in entertaining you, whether she has invited

you to a dinner-party, reception or ball, and it is only proper that you should pay her the compliment of calling on her afterwards ; and if you can tell her how much you have enjoyed it, so much the better. Cards of inquiry cannot be sent by post for a similar reason ; a card sent in this way would be no compliment, because the object of the call is to obtain news of the state of the invalid. Cards of inquiry must be either left in person or sent by a servant—they must never be sent by post. It is not so very long ago since it was considered quite a solecism to send a visiting-card by post, and our friends had to find out our “At home” day by degrees. Visiting-cards are now so often sent by post that special envelopes for the purpose have been brought out by the stationers—tiny envelopes adorned with the crest or monogram, and just a thought larger than a visiting-card. Many ladies send out their visiting-cards in these envelopes at the commencement of the season, so that their friends may know of their “At home” day. The change-of-address cards are sent in the same way, and also a change of “day.” The visiting-card is not infrequently used as an invitation card when an entertainment is got up hurriedly at the end of the season. Even the Duchess of Sutherland sent out her visiting-cards in this way at the end of July ; writing “Come and dance,” or “Come and dine,” as the case might be. When time is an object, visiting-cards have their uses, as one always has them in

the house, so they can easily be sent off on the spur of the moment. The large square "At home" card is, of course, correct for all ceremonious invitations. A visiting-card would only be used for an informal affair.

P.P.C. cards are sometimes sent by post, and this is an innovation which must commend itself to people of good sense. It is all very well for ladies who have carriages to drive round with their cards of leave-taking; but it is a tiresome operation enough for people who are not so fortunately circumstanced. P.P.C. cards must be left if a long absence is contemplated, as hostesses might send dinner invitations, and be inconvenienced by delay in reply. But the trouble of leaving these cards in person is very great, and it is additionally tiresome when the time is short before departure. A few professional people first had the courage to make the new departure and send their P.P.C. cards by post. Society folk caught at the idea, and now quite a number of people send their P.P.C. cards in this expeditious fashion.

## CARD-LEAVING

WITH regard to the ordinary routine of card-leaving, there is very little novelty to describe. A young lady under chaperonage used not to have visiting-cards of her own, her name being printed underneath her mother's instead. So many girls follow some special avocation at present, such as literature or art, that it has become quite usual for Miss Débutante to have a visiting-card all to herself. Joint cards can still be used for social purposes if required; but it is evident that a professional card cannot contain the name of a chaperon. If a young lady were calling on a publisher or an editor, for example, she would not send up her mother's card—it would look like trying to import a social element into a business transaction.

A card should always be sent up beforehand at a business interview, when calling on an editor or a lawyer, for example, or inquiring about the character of a servant. Cards are never sent up beforehand when the visit is of a social character. The cards are supposed to be left on the hall-table on the way out, though, as a matter of fact, nearly all smart people pop them down on the way up. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, one is apt to forget them on the way out; in the second, if the host is at home, he will

probably come down to the hall to see you out, and it is awkward to leave a card in his presence.

If young ladies have their names printed on their mother's card, their names are placed immediately underneath hers, thus :—

Lady Smith.

Miss Smith.

Miss Beatrice Smith.

(or "The Misses Smith" if preferred).

When a widower is left with daughters who are old enough to enter into society, he usually has their names printed underneath his own, the visiting-card in this case being the size of a lady's, and slightly bordered with black.

Turning down the corner of a card has two meanings. It means that the owner has left it in person, and also that all the ladies in the house are included in the visit. Supposing a lady has two daughters, we can either leave two cards (one for the mother and one for the daughters) or else one card with the corner turned down. A gentleman's card is never turned down in this way, because there might be young unmarried ladies in the house, and a gentleman must not leave cards on young girls.

Nearly all visiting and card-leaving falls on the ladies of the family, as gentlemen's engagements sometimes prevent them from making calls. A wife leaves cards for her husband, and very often for her sons (supposing the latter to be acquainted with the friends on whom she is calling). If she is calling on a married couple she leaves one of her

cards and two of her husband's (one for the master of the house and one for the mistress). If she is calling on a widow she leaves one of her husband's cards and one of her own, if on a young single lady one of her own.

Visiting - cards should be of good quality but perfectly plain in style. Nothing eccentric looks well on a visiting-card ; one must be content to follow the crowd in this respect. I know one woman who struck out a line for herself with some success, substituting grey visiting - cards for the ordinary white ones. Grey was her passion at the moment, all her stationery being of this colour, relieved by a red monogram—her name in a tangle of letters going down one side of the page. But several of her friends adopted the idea of the grey visiting-cards, so she gave it up after a while. I think there is something to be said in favour of the idea ; a grey card is not so easily read as a white one, but it does not soil so easily. Some people have the edge of their cards rounded so as to prevent them getting untidy, but a plain card looks the best.

I met a lady novelist some time since, who had some very peculiar cards. They were made very long and narrow, so as to fit a wallet-shaped case, which she much affected ; and her name was printed in large firm characters—the *fac-simile* of her autograph. The ordinary visiting-card has the name of the owner printed in the centre, with her address at the left-hand lower corner and her "At

home " day opposite it, or else at the left-hand upper corner, either in a straight or diagonal line. Many ladies have their club address printed on their cards; it should be at the right-hand lower corner if so, opposite the private address.

There should never be any delay in taking out a card. Watch how nimbly a society woman picks her card out of her card-case, and pops it down like a flash of lightning, and then note the time that it takes the country cousin to perform the same operation. Nothing looks worse than to fumble for a card; it looks as if a person were quite unused to society. All awkwardness can be prevented by the use of a little forethought. Always put one card by itself in the front compartment of your card-case, then you can get it out swiftly and neatly whether your gloves are thick or thin.



## INTRODUCTIONS

WHEN to introduce, how to do it, and when to let it alone—these things may sound simple to the neophyte, but they are not always easy even to the most experienced. Anyone who has mastered the art of introduction has mastered the art of society—understanding the relative position of people and the art of bringing them pleasantly together.

Much good is often effected by a useful introduction, and nothing is more annoying than an unwelcome one—when a careless hostess, in the joy of her heart, drags you up to the very person you have been trying to avoid for years. It is sometimes a little difficult to forgive the person who has perpetrated this outrage, and I am afraid one always has a feeling of owing her a grudge for having introduced the undesirable acquaintance. It is more annoying when there was no real necessity for effecting the introduction. It is quite conceivable that circumstances might arise which would make it absolutely necessary to bring together two people who have no desire for acquaintance, but no one likes it done without excuse. Unwelcome introductions are more often made from ignorance than from any other reason—the hostess gets flurried and fancies she must effect the introduction when,



perhaps, there is not the slightest necessity for it. It may possibly be useful to state when introductions are necessary and when they are simply optional.

Introductions are, of course, necessary at a dinner-party. The guests have no choice in the matter. If you were sent in to dinner with your bitterest enemy you could not refuse his escort ; neither could he object to escorting you. There would have to be a truce during dinner—even if it were for that occasion only !

Introductions should always be made at a dance. Permission is not always asked of the lady in this instance, as it is assumed that she will be pleased to have partners presented to her. On the other hand, a ball-room introduction does not count for much afterwards—it is quite optional whether the lady recognises the gentleman next time she meets him out. It is more graceful for her to do so (personally, I think it is rather horrid of a woman to dance with a man one night and cut him the next), but she is free to drop the acquaintance if she desires to do so.

Another time in which introductions are absolutely necessary is in the case of a house-guest. When a person has a guest under her roof it is her duty to introduce her to everyone who comes to the house or whom she happens to meet when she is with her. The same thing holds good with regard to the guest ; it is her duty to introduce to her hostess any acquaintance who calls on her or whom she happens to meet

in society. Supposing the guest were at the theatre with her hostess, and a gentleman came into the box to speak to her, it would be very improper of her not to present him to her hostess before entering into conversation with him.

Introductions must always be made to a celebrity. Supposing that a party is invited "to meet" some distinguished person, the members of it will not like to go away without having had a word with him. He is there to be seen and to be spoken to; he is already on a high pinnacle, so to speak, and it is incumbent on him to make himself pleasant to all and sundry.

Introductions are distinctly desirable on "At home" days. A popular hostess is always one who introduces a good deal. It is much nicer to introduce each new arrival to the rest of the company on an "At home" day, and, indeed, it is almost necessary when only a few people are present. But a hostess need not think she is absolutely obliged to introduce one set of callers to another. It is awkward not to do so, but it will be still more awkward to effect the introduction if there is some very decided reason for the contrary. Supposing that the wife of a vicar was entertaining some very great lady, and that a very vulgar woman came in who lived next door to the latter—to effect an introduction in this case would not earn the undying gratitude of the superior in rank. The vicar's wife should try to avoid effecting this very unwelcome presentation, know-

ing that the aftermath would be distinctly unpleasant.

To refuse an introduction is a very unpleasant thing ; on the other hand, it is highly undesirable to effect it when wished for by only one of the parties. Everyone wants to know Mr Somebody, but Mr Somebody will not thank you for bringing along Mr Nobody. Luckily there is one golden rule in a case of this kind which everyone who goes much into society would do well to lay to heart — when in doubt, consult the superior in rank as to whether the introduction is desired. Supposing Mr Nobody says to you, “Will you introduce me to Mr Somebody?” it is best to say, “Yes, I shall be delighted ; I will make an opportunity directly.” Then go to Mr Somebody, when you can do so unobserved, and ask if you might bring up Mr Nobody. “Would you mind? It would be very good-natured of you. But there isn’t the least occasion if you dislike it ; he will not know I have asked.” If a cheerful assent is given, so much the better—your task is pleasanter ; but if the reply is in the negative you must manage to evaporate in the crowd and avoid Mr Nobody until the great man is gone. If reviled, you must answer with apologies, giving discreet murmurs such as the following, “I couldn’t get near him ! He was so surrounded !” or “He was so tired, I really couldn’t introduce anyone else to him ! You must forgive me. It would have been cruelty to animals. Another time we must hope for better

luck!" Such are the smiling insin-  
cerities uttered by the skilful hostess;  
but she will be more skilful if she exer-  
cises forethought, and only invites people  
together who are in the same set—who  
will be pleased to know one another if  
they do not do so already.

As for the remaining part of my subject  
—how to introduce—this ought to be  
simple enough if people would only re-  
collect one rule—always to present the  
inferior to the superior. Introduce the  
commoner to the person of rank, the  
unmarried to the married, and (above all  
things!) the gentleman to the lady. It  
is an unpardonable error to say, "May  
I introduce Miss Dash to Mr Blank,"  
or (as some ignorant girls say) "When  
*I* was introduced to *him*!" It follows  
that the name of the inferior is men-  
tioned first, and this is what makes it so  
difficult for people to recollect. Instinct  
makes them wish to mention the most  
important name first, but instinct is  
wrong in this case. The more import-  
ant person is the one to consult (in case  
of doubt), but the name of the inferior  
must be put first. So it must be "Mr  
So-and-So—Lord Dash"; "Miss Brown  
— Mrs Jones"; "Mr Blank — Miss  
Smith." Clearness of articulation is  
distinctly desirable, but how seldom it  
is heard! How often does the confused  
utterance of the hostess frustrate the very  
purpose for which the speech of presenta-  
tion was made! The person introduced  
to us may possess a name full of thrilling  
associations; he may be a great traveller,  
a great politician, or a great novelist—

someone whom we may have always desired to see! He may be any of these. He may (as in the case of Mr Justin McCarthy, for example) be all three rolled together—but “Mr Mumble Mumble” leaves us cold. I don’t know why people are so apt to become incoherent when they introduce, but I fancy the uncertainty as to which name to place first may have something to do with it. It is a little troublesome to attract the attention of both persons, as is necessary if the introduction is not to be a fiasco, and this may also impart an element of nervousness into what ought to be done in the most easy and natural way in the world.

## “AT HOME” DAYS

THERE is very little fresh to say about the fashion of “At home” days; it is a function that is thoroughly understood. Like many other pleasant things, it is a fashion that we have borrowed from our French neighbours—across the Channel it has always been understood that it was correct to call on Madame on her particular day. In London we also find this extremely convenient. The afternoon is full of engagements; there are *matinées*, concerts, visits, all the busy round of London life—no room is left for casual callers. What can be more trying than to be stopped by a visit from an acquaintance just as you are starting off for a long round of afternoon engagements? There are only two courses open—to speak out at once or not at all. Either tell your friend of your engagements or else cheerfully give them up without a word. Sometimes it is possible to invite your friend to accompany you so that you can talk on the way, but this cannot always be done. One feels less compunction at refusing the chance visitor if one can tell her that if she comes on Thursday or Friday, as the case may be, she will always find us at home. One has a day as much

for the convenience of one's friends as for one's self, and one is glad to think that an acquaintance who lives at a distance should be saved a fruitless journey.

“At home” days are of several kinds, the entertainment varying according to the ideas of the lady of the house. The invitation is the same in any case—simply the visiting-card with “Thursdays” or “1st Friday” printed in one corner. The right-hand corner (opposite the address) is generally chosen, but some people prefer the “At home” day to be placed at the left-hand side at the top. Some people write the dates at the top of the card, supposing that their day comes very seldom—let us say once a month. The dates are a help to the visitors in remembering the day, and the hostess is much more likely to have a crowd if she takes the trouble to write them. A little while since it was considered very improper to send a visiting-card by post, but the fashion of “At home” days has altered all this, as a visiting-card is now an invitation. “At home” cards are frequently sent by post, either at the commencement of the season or if the hostess changes her address. In old times an “At home” day used to be mentioned in a somewhat surreptitious way, but the fashion of sending invitations for it through the post is now thoroughly recognised.

Some hostesses like a great crowd on their “At home” days, whilst others pride themselves chiefly on being select.



I think that an anxiety to have the rooms full is apt to tend in the direction of vulgarity. I often hear ladies imploring people to come to their "At homes," and scolding them violently if they don't! It seems to me to be quite the wrong way to set to work; people ought to seek for an invitation to a lady's reception, they ought not to require to be whipped up like the dumb driven cattle of the poet. Of course, if a lady did not meet with sufficient response to her invitations, it would be proper for her to drop her day altogether; but, as a rule, people are only too glad to avail themselves of invitations of this kind.

The success of a "day" depends to a great extent on the individuality of the hostess; she must have the art of managing a crowd and yet be so pleasant if only one visitor came that he would think himself fortunate to have found her alone. Plenty of introductions are required on an "At home" day or else a harmonious circle cannot be formed. It is best to introduce each visitor to the next as she enters (unless there is any special reason to the contrary), as long as the circle is small and a general conversation is desirable. The hostess should put on a pretty dress on her "At home" day; a nice toilette is a compliment to her friends. It is better for her not to be too smart if she is not certain of having a good many visitors. A very ornate tea-gown looks ridiculous, for example, unless there is *beaucoup de monde*; whilst a



plainer dress seems more in keeping with a simple style of receiving. I have an awful memory of a little lady—a newly-rich person—whom I once called upon on her “At home” day and found in a gorgeous drawing-room, all alone, in a bright yellow tea-gown with a host of yellow teacups laid out on a side-table in readiness for visitors who never came. Her conversation was uninteresting and provincial, and her small flat was decorated in a style which was perfectly palatial. I went on from her to a charming woman who lived in the same neighbourhood, and happened to have the same day. It happened that I was the only visitor again, but it felt like a fortunate accident. My friend was so interesting that it seemed delightful to have her alone. She wore a simple dress, something plainly made and of a neutral tint; her room looked quiet and refined. We sat by the fire and had a delightful chat, and I was charmed to have found her by herself. What made the difference? The circumstances were identical, yet the results were exactly opposite. The reason was simply this—one woman had mastered the art of entertaining, the other had not.

With regard to refreshments, nothing but tea is required on the ordinary “At home” day, with bread and butter and cakes. The hostess pours out the tea herself and hands it to her guests. If an “At home” day is on a large scale, the hostess will not have the time to attend to the tea herself. In this case

it is better to have it served in a separate room, with a servant standing behind the buffet to pour out. The refreshments might be a little more elaborate in this case, including tea and coffee, claret-cup, little sandwiches of various kinds, and every description of cake.

## LUNCHEON-PARTIES

AN invitation to a luncheon-party is generally conveyed through the medium of a friendly note ; printed cards would only be used if it was going to be a very ceremonious affair. Luncheon is supposed to be rather a feminine meal, so that ladies would not be offended if they found themselves in the majority, but a London hostess generally manages to invite about an equal number of either sex.

Hostesses often give a luncheon-party for some particular object, such as to introduce some rising star to some persons who are likely to write about him, and others who are likely to take him up ; the reason of the gathering is well understood, though "to meet" is not written on the card. Apologetic luncheons are often given towards the end of the season to people whom the hostess feels she has been neglectful of during its progress, and there are many more instances of the luncheon-party given "with intention." When I hear of a luncheon-party being given I am often inclined to say with the Mock Turtle in *Alice in Wonderland*, "With what porpoise?" The London hostess is like the fish in the sea, who, as it was explained to little Alice, never set out on a journey without some definite object in view.

Verbal invitations are often given for this informal meal, and I have known a hostess collect quite a large luncheon-party for the next day during the course of a stroll in the park on Sunday.

Luncheon used to be informal in every way a little while since, but now it differs very little from a dinner, either with regard to the waiting or the food. Perhaps there are not quite so many courses as at dinner, and one begins with a slice of iced melon in the summer or *hors-d'œuvres* in place of soup, but otherwise there is very little difference except that mayonnaise or dressed crab is served instead of fresh fish. Even "the roast" is not omitted, and I have several times been a witness to the sorrows of a near-sighted lady who accepted a serve of underdone beef under the impression that she was about to partake of York ham.

When the visitor arrives she is shown into the drawing-room at once, she is not invited to leave her hat and jacket. If she had a heavy wrap she would give it to the servant in the hall. Visitors remain for such a short time after lunch that it would be very bad form for a guest to take off her bonnet, as though she were going to spend the day. A little knowledge of etiquette is a dangerous thing—a fact which was strongly borne in upon me the other day when one of my correspondents on a lady's paper wrote to ask me whether she ought to put on her bonnet whenever she expected visitors to lunch. The lady was mixing up the duties of hostess

and guest, and I thought it was a curious example of what is vulgarly called getting hold of the wrong end of the stick. I must not forget to mention that the French etiquette with regard to *toilette de déjeuner* is exactly the opposite of our own, the ladies being invited to leave their hats and jackets in another apartment so that they may feel more at their ease. I saw this plan carried out rather ruthlessly by a great French celebrity, who gave a luncheon-party at her hotel in London, and insisted on the guests divesting themselves of their headgear and out-door wraps before they sat down to table. Those who were acquainted with French customs had come all ready with the smartest of blouses and most immaculate of *coiffures*, but I saw more than one lady, who had dressed in haste or else had depended for her effect on her outer raiment, making fruitless attempts to cling to the becoming hat or the tailor-made jacket, which like charity had covered a multitude of sins.

The hostess often wears a pretty tea-jacket at a luncheon-party, or else some description of gown which is very evidently intended for indoor wear. What our lively neighbours call the *fête*-dress is well in place for her at an occasion of this kind.

Introductions are usually effected during the interval before luncheon, so that conversation may become general during the meal. General conversation is correct at lunch, it is different from dinner which so often resolves itself

into a series of *tête-à-têtes*. The guests have more opportunity of conversing with their hostess at lunch than at any other meal, and the talk is able to be more confidential if the servants are not present all the time.

There is very little formality about going into luncheon, the transit from the drawing-room to the dining-room is effected with as little ceremony as possible. The servant announces that luncheon is ready, and the hostess proposes an adjournment to the dining-room, addressing the lady who is most distinguished in rank. If the master of the house is at home he escorts the principal lady guest, the other ladies would come next and then the hostess, the gentlemen following in her wake. The most distinguished lady sits next the host, and the most important gentleman next the hostess. When people drop in unexpectedly to luncheon no precedence is observed, but when a luncheon-party is given the host or hostess intimates to the guests where they shall sit.

The decorations of a luncheon-table should be bright but not too formal. Anything heavy is out of place. Neither does a gorgeous table-centre look well at luncheon; the hostess is wise if she concentrates her attention a good deal upon her tablecloth, which should be of the very finest that can be procured. Drawn thread work is always pretty in a tablecloth for lunch, also insertion in white lace, or monograms embroidered in white. Sometimes a little colour can

be introduced into the cloth with good effect. I saw a charming tablecloth lately at a luncheon-party embroidered all over with Chinese mandarins and junks and palm trees in pink flax thread ; a bowl of pink roses formed the centre-piece supported by a group of white china Cupids. Blue - and - white embroidery looks well with a willow-pattern service, or yellow and white with pure white china.

Luncheon is served *à la Russe*, and coffee is given at the conclusion of the meal, either at the table or in the drawing-room. Liqueurs are handed at the same time.

If the host is at home the gentlemen generally remain in the dining-room for a while before joining the ladies. If he is absent the guests sometimes make their exodus from the dining-room simultaneously, but very often the hostess gives the gentlemen permission to remain a little time over their wine.



## DINNERS

I REALLY don't think there is any medium about dinners. They must be nice or nasty. Either everything is pleasant and the wheels of the machinery move noiselessly, or the affair is a miserable failure, wretched alike for host and guest. Who does not know the dinner at which the hostess wears a worried look and the host nags at the servants: where there are long waits between the courses, messed-up food and flurried servants, and a general impression that everything is going wrong? The guests go away in the worst of tempers, and they feel as if they never want to go out to dinner again! But a charming dinner-party in a delightful house will cure that feeling; a dinner which is managed to perfection, where the food and the wines are of the best, well-chosen, sufficient, yet not superabundant; where the company is of the brightest, the service perfect, and the host and the hostess as happy and unconcerned as though they themselves were guests.

All the conditions above-named cannot be commanded by all, but the essential points are within the reach of most. If the entertainers are not attempting too much, it is possible for them to be happy and untroubled. It is only when we are imitating a style



of living which is above our means that we are liable to be anxious and disturbed. Let everything be done in proper style every day, and let the dinner by invitation merely represent our ordinary style of living at its best.

Luckily, elaboration is somewhat out of date. Even the grandest dinners are marked by a certain attempt at simplicity. Your modern epicure likes to know what he is eating! The aim of the modern *chef* is not to conceal the identity of the viands he is dressing, but to set them forth to the best advantage without doing any injustice to their individuality. In the matter of wines the same idea obtains. The modern *bon-vivant* does not wish for a great variety of wines, he has too much respect for his digestion; if he takes champagne he does not care for many preliminary vintages, and it is more than possible that he prefers to drink nothing but claret from the beginning of dinner to the end. Let each article of food be the best of its kind, and cooked to perfection; let it not be too hackneyed nor too early, but exactly at its best, and the true epicure will appreciate a dinner which is not pretentious but excellent in itself.

The guests must be like the dinner—well-assorted, *piquante*, and not too fine. The host is an important person at a dinner-party; his name is invariably mentioned in the invitation, and this shows that he has an important part to perform. The dinner invitations are

sent out in the names of "Mr and Mrs ——," or if the informal note is adopted, it is "We hope you can come." The answer must be worded in the same style as the invitation; the formal "At home" card must be replied to in the third person; the friendly note by one in a similar style.

The host and hostess shake hands with the guests as they arrive. The host tells the gentlemen which ladies they will take in to dinner, introducing them if they are not already acquainted. The host leads the way, with the most distinguished lady guest, the other guests follow according to precedence, and the hostess comes last of all, with the gentleman who is highest in rank. If the gentlemen are not sure as to the order in which they should proceed to the dining-room it is the hostess's place to let them know. She will say, "Will you go next, Sir Robert?" or give him a sign that it is his turn, and he will then quickly offer his arm to the lady whom he has to take in to dinner. A gentleman offers his right arm to the lady he takes in to dinner because she is going to sit at his right hand. The host remains standing at the end of the table until everyone is seated so that he may show people where to sit if they are in doubt.

## DINNER

A DINNER-PARTY is a much less formidable affair than it used to be some years ago. The dinner itself is not so long, as the modern epicure much prefers a few well-cooked dishes to a variety of mysterious *entrées*. The host, relieved of the necessity of carving, is able to chat pleasantly to his neighbours, and conversation flows evenly along, unchecked by any reference to the mechanical part of the meal. It must have been terrible to go out to dinner in the days when the host carved and it was the fashion to press people to eat. Politeness in the days of our grandfathers also demanded that no one should accept anything without first offering it to his neighbour, and the progress of dinner must have been greatly hindered by these strange little passages of arms. It may have had its pleasant side too—the personal interest of the host, and the kindly attention of one's neighbours, but it is really much nicer to dine *à la Russe*, when the waiting is perfect, and the food appears at your elbow almost as noiselessly as though one were at the "White Cats" banquet, and one needs nothing more to express acceptance or refusal than the slightest word or gesture. The cumbersome *épérgne* is never seen on

a modern table; there ought to be nothing to exclude the sight of one's *vis-à-vis*. The custom of having dinner *à la Russe* has been good for the florists, for the long expanse of table must be prettily decorated now that the solid elements of the meal are no longer visible, and there is no excuse for having an ugly table. Flowers in glass specimen-vases are sometimes placed irregularly on the table, so as to give a negligent effect, but some hostesses prefer a set design—long sprays of orchids and ferns, radiating from the centre of the table, flowers placed in straw canoes or gondolas, or arranged as though they were growing on trees, the trunks made of virgin cork, and the boughs of green wire covered with asparagus fern. The quantity of tiny silver sweet dishes which used to be liked so much are now considered somewhat too suggestive of a dressing-table. An appearance of carelessness is prized above all—the favourite fancy of the moment is to get long branches of roses, roots and all, and lay them all along the table. The roses are wired to the stem, and the roots are carefully cleaned, and then partly veiled in asparagus fern, but the idea that the rose tree has been carelessly plucked up by the roots and laid on the table is voted extremely charming in this artificial age.

The dinner is carved at the side-table by the butler, and two servants go all down the table at either side, offering the dishes to the guests in the order in which they are seated, without distinc-

tion of sex. The dishes are first handed to the ladies on either side of the host, and from thence to the other guests. *Hors-d'œuvres* used not to be thought of in the old-fashioned dinners; but now we should never dream of sitting down to table without something as an appetiser—a little caviare, or an anchovy, or a scrap of *leber-wurst*, or some olives. We have borrowed this idea from Russia along with the way of serving dinner. Perhaps in time we shall have our *hors-d'œuvres* served as they do, in a separate room instead of at the dinner-table. The Russian *hors-d'œuvres* are served in the ante-room, on a number of little tables, and the guests walk from one to another, taking a little of whatever they fancy. It sounds a bit barbarous, but it may really pass the time more pleasantly than the dull conversation with which we try to embellish the *mauvais quart d'heure*.

A few words as to the different courses may not be out of place at this point. The *hors-d'œuvres* are generally handed round in a separate dish, and a little plate for them is given to each guest, with a small knife and fork laid upon it. If oysters are given they are not handed round, but are placed on a small plate in the centre of each cover, before the visitors enter the dining-room. Three or five oysters are given, and the thin brown bread and butter is handed round. Dinner now takes its accustomed way—soup, fish, two *entrées*, (hot and cold), the joint, game, sweets, savouries, cheese, dessert. Sweets are

not made so great a feature of as formerly, the wise hostess pays the most attention to her savouries. *Chou au gratin*, for example, is a very simple and inexpensive dish, but always appreciated by a true epicure, and how many nice dishes can be made out of cheese! *Fondus* and *soufflés* of cheese are always liked, when more elaborate dishes are passed by.

Ice pudding is a favourite amongst sweets, and this is now generally served in the natural course of events, instead of just before the dessert. The hot and cold sweets are first offered, and then the ice pudding, which is eaten on an ordinary pudding-plate. A little while since it was the custom to hand the ice pudding just before dessert, the small glass ice-plate being put on the dessert-plate underneath the finger-bowl.

With regard to the wine, sherry is offered with soup, champagne with the first *entrée*, and then throughout the dinner; claret is also offered, as many people take nothing else. Hock or Chablis is sometimes offered with fish, but people do not as a rule drink the variety of wines in which their grandfathers delighted. And many people take no wine at all, and this is now so frequent as to attract little observation. Apollinaris-water or soda-water should always be ready in syphons in case there are total abstainers among the guests. Liqueurs are handed round after ice pudding, or offered with the coffee.

When dessert is finished the ladies

leave the table, the hostess attracting the attention of the most distinguished lady guest by means of a bow, rising from the table as she makes it, the gentleman next the door (or the host) opens it, and stands beside it until all the ladies have passed out. The most distinguished lady leads the way, the hostess walking last. Coffee is then brought into the drawing-room, and it is afterwards served to the gentlemen in the dining-room. Tea is served in the drawing-room after the gentlemen have joined the ladies, and it is not the fashion for men to linger long over their wine. If no other guests are expected the evening is not kept up very late, eleven o'clock is about the time for departure in town, or half-past ten in the country. But in town a dinner-party is very often a mere preamble to an enormous reception which is kept up till the small hours, the evening being enlivened by professional singers or reciters, and all the latest novelties which can be procured. A palmist is often to be found at such a gathering, generally in some little room by herself with a *queue* of people waiting outside the door.



## DINNER-TABLE DECORATION

EVERY hostess has her own ideas on the subject of dinner-table decoration, and some adhere to a certain style whatever may happen to be the fashion. Both high and low decorations are seen at present, but the consensus of opinion seems to be in favour of the latter, because they do not interfere with conversation.

Great ingenuity has been exercised by the florists in the invention of designs which shall be low and ornamental, for it is much easier to erect a high bank of flowers than to comply with the conditions above-mentioned. Perhaps one of the most successful forms is the crescent; the flowers are placed in a low semi-circular trough, and finished off with an aigrette of taller blossoms at each side. Only low-growing flowers are used in the crescent itself—such as forget-me-nots or heart's-ease—and the aigrettes are a contrast, both in colour and style; yellow marguerites mounting guard over the myosotis, and white ones over the pansies. These crescents are placed at either side of the centre-piece, which may either consist of a large trophy of similar flowers or of blossoms placed in a silver bowl.



Perhaps the favourite centre-piece consists of flowers arranged in a pyramidal form, so that none of the foundation shows. The lowest blossoms should start from the tablecloth, and look as though they grew entirely unsupported. A wire foundation is used in this case, but it is quite invisible. Long trails of flowers or foliage are sometimes placed round the base, more particularly smilax—most graceful of creepers. If the table is a long one, a little space may be filled up by dotting rosettes of flowers about at intervals. These rosettes are wonderfully pretty, consisting of a few flowers wired together, with a little fern and moss, so as to stand upright on the cloth. If a root of pansies or garden daisies was taken up and set straight on the table, the effect would be much the same. These dear little clumps are always very much admired, and they look well in half-blown roses, or azaleas, or in variegated pansies.

The "bow centre" is another favourite form, and looks well in yellow marguerites or roses. The invisible foundation is in the shape of a bow, and the trophy is finished off with a large bow of satin ribbon of the same shade, the ends falling over on to the tablecloth. No silken table-centre is needed when the flowers are so decorative in themselves, but a transparent cloth is often used, laid over a foundation of coloured silk. Supposing that the decorations consisted of sweet peas in every shade, the tablecloth might be laid over pale

pink silk, or yellow satin might gleam through the lace if the decorations consisted of Maréchal Niel roses or yellow marguerites. Some hostesses adhere to the old-fashioned table-centre, but it is better to do without it if possible.

The beauty of flower-stalks is quite a modern discovery, and some of the prettiest table decorations recently seen have owed their effect to long trails of rose-stalks, tied up with asparagus fern and laid carelessly on the table. Roses would form the centre-piece, placed in one of the huge silver bowls which are so much used for the purpose at present, and the long trails of foliage would be laid on the table at either side. Roses of every colour would be used in this design. Ribbons are occasionally introduced into floral designs, but always with a purpose, and not as an ornament in themselves. They are quite in place tying up a wealth of flowers, as in the bow-centre already described, or in a still flatter style of decoration in which bows of pale blue satin ribbon are laid on the cloth with sprays of pink roses drawn through the loop. One big bow should be laid in the centre of the table, and another at one side. The true lover's knot is the best shape for the centre bow. This is called the Pompadour style.

Formality is not in favour at present. Sometimes any attempt at arrangement is laid aside, and the table is covered with roses, laid about in different directions, with gleams of old silver

or Dresden china showing here and there. But all the methods above described require great skill in the arrangement, and a good centre-piece is a considerable help to the amateur. The prettiest one I have seen of late was in the shape of a rustic stile, with a little tree made of a blackthorn branch beside it. The lower part of the stand and the stile itself was made in some kind of metal, covered with pale green paint; the blackthorn boughs were also covered with green. There were places at each side of the gate and on other parts of the stand in which flowers could be placed, and long trails of flowers or foliage could start from the base at every side. The whole effect was most charming.

The Japanese style of decoration is no longer new, but it makes a pleasant change when the hostess happens to be the possessor of some handsome Japanese bowls. The flowers chosen should be of the long-stalked and heavy-headed variety (such as purple iris or Japanese lilies), and only one kind should be placed in each receptacle. The flowers must stand quite upright, the ends of the stalks being held by a metal clip which is placed at the bottom of the bowl. Most of the art shops sell these fasteners for about a shilling each; but they can easily be made at home with the aid of a little strip of tin bent into the requisite shape. Purple iris can be placed in one bowl, lilies or azaleas or apple-blossom in another. It does not matter whether the bowls are china or

metal. A very few flowers can be made to go a long way by this method, and it also affords an opportunity for the display of good Oriental bowls. Any kind of flowering shrub looks well when used like this.

## DANCES

I AM afraid it is only in novels that a girl has such a beautiful time at her first dance. We know that if the heroine goes to a ball she is always the belle of the evening; she dances better than anyone else, though she has never had any lessons, and her faded muslin entirely eclipses all the smarter toilettes around. Now, in real life a first dance is not always such a pleasurable experience, and a young girl's enjoyment is often a little damped by her natural timidity on making her first appearance in society. There is no more pitiable creature in the world than a girl who goes to a dance and does not enjoy herself. If she does not get plenty of partners she thinks that she is plain and that no one will ever care for her, and that she is quite different from the rest of the world. She envies the well-dressed young married woman who seems to get such a number of partners, and that bright young girl in rather a shabby frock who dances so well and seems to have so much to say. Most women can remember some such experience as this—even women who are socially successful in later life.

I have often been amused by the extraordinary expression some young ladies put on in a ballroom, when they

are wondering whether anyone will come up and ask them to dance. "Don't look so cross," I once heard a girl whisper to her sister. "Nobody will ever ask you to dance if you look like that." Some girls are so dreadfully afraid that people should think they are looking out for partners, that they end by frightening everyone away. There is a sort of shyness which makes people look perfectly savage, and I have often seen this deplorable expression on the face of a youthful *débutante*.

Truth to say, it is rather an ordeal for a girl, that sitting still on the bench beside her mother, and wondering if anyone will choose her. (Men would look worse under similar circumstances—we all know how terrible they look at a leap-year dance.) She is afraid to bow to the men she knows for fear they should think that she wants them to invite her to dance, and if she does not recognise them, they may not have the courage to come up. It is perhaps not the best moment for a bow, a girl is wiser to look round when she first enters the room, and give a bow and smile to those she knows before seating herself. A girl's first ball-gown should be white. Pearls are the most suitable ornaments, and they are wonderfully becoming to a youthful complexion. A low dress is correct at a dance—at least it is in England. In France a young girl never "*décolts*" until she is engaged, when at the party given in honour of her betrothal, she wears a

gown cut in a tiny V. Diamonds are much more worn by young people than was formerly the case; a diamond crescent in the hair is a pretty ornament, and I always think it looks much better above a young face than an old one.

The town hostess is to be found at the head of the stairs, the country one at the drawing-room door. No one ever enters a ballroom arm-in-arm; the chaperon comes first, her daughters follow her, the men of the party bringing up the rear. The hostess shakes hands with all her guests, and also with any friend whom they have brought. At large London balls people arrive very late, and the dancing is not carried on with any particular spirit. People look in at several balls during the course of the evening, they stand about and show off their toilettes, and talk to their friends, with now and then an incidental waltz. But at a young people's party everyone takes care to come early, for fear of not getting any partners—the men know that all the best dancers are snapped up at once at a Cinderella dance. The party only lasts from eight to twelve, and the cards of the good dancers get filled up as soon as they enter the ballroom. My readers would be surprised if they knew how many young ladies write to me to know what they should say when a young man asks them to dance. What do they want to say? I can't imagine! There is really no occasion to say anything, except,



"I shall be very pleased," or, "I am afraid I am engaged."

Another question I am always being asked by my correspondents is, whether they shall take off their gloves at supper. Of course that depends entirely on what they eat, and as long ball-gloves are rather a trouble to take off perhaps the wearer is wise to confine herself to things which can be eaten with a fork. Sandwiches and jelly do not necessitate the removal of the gloves, but it would be necessary to take them off if one had to break a roll, or to eat fruit. How many times you may dance with the same young man is another question which I very often get. I invariably reply that three times is sufficient, and four times quite the limit, but I never believe for a moment that my advice about this will be taken.

It is not correct to take leave of the hostess at a dance, particularly if one is leaving very early, when it is better to slip away quietly, after the fashion that our lively neighbours call, "*partant en Anglais*." (All unceremonious habits are called English by the French novelists, whilst pleasant manners are supposed to be entirely French.) A young girl would naturally tell her hostess how much she had enjoyed herself, and she must on no account forget to pay her duty call on the next "At home" day.



## JUVENILE PARTIES

NOTHING is quite so tiring for the hostess as a juvenile party, yet nothing is more satisfactory, for she knows that her tiny guests have enjoyed themselves, and that their relations have enjoyed seeing the little ones happy. The grown-up guest enters full of wreathed smiles, and departs spasmodically. "So kind of you to ask me! So very pleased to have come!" But the hostess knows that the entrance may have been preceded by "What a bore!" and the exit by "How dull!" as soon as she is safely out of hearing. But Tommy—he is all candour! He may enter shy and frigid, uncertain if he is going to enjoy himself, like a wild Indian in an unfriendly camp, but if he gradually relaxes—if he is pleased at the efforts to amuse him—and if he goes away saying, "It has been awfully jolly!" is not the hostess rewarded? Is she not happy, as though trebly crowned, when she knows that if Tommy says, "It has been awfully jolly!" he means it? He would have said it was "a beastly party" if he had thought so—has been known to say it, at the top of his voice, at an entertainment where he was not entertained.

January is the best time for a juvenile

party. The children are home for the holidays, and when once the Christmas festivities are over they are delighted to have something to anticipate. Making out the invitations is an interesting affair—writing the envelopes in painstaking round-hand, and putting in the names of the *invités*. The invitations are issued on “At home” cards bought from the stationer’s, or they are sometimes inscribed in the following fashion:—“Nellie and Jackie request the pleasure of Maudie’s company on Saturday, the 6th, from 4 to 8” (or from 4 to 9, as the case may be). Christian names only are used when two families are intimate; when the children are new acquaintances, “Master” and “Miss” and surnames would be used instead.

It is a good thing to let children feel the responsibility of entertaining, however little they are. The little hosts or hostesses should be posted at the door to receive their guests, their mother placing herself a little further inside the room (under the chandelier, for example) so that the first welcome to the guests comes from the children themselves. About half an hour should be allowed for the assembling of the guests—the little ones would like to start off directly after lunch if they could, there is never any fear of their being late!—and then tea is announced, and the children form a procession into the tea-room. The eldest boy of the house leads the way with the little girl he prefers, the rest follow as they choose. The table is

prettily set out with pink flowers, pink sweetmeats, cakes iced with pink, and pink candles and candle-shades—nothing can be too dainty for the gay little company which is seated round the table—the little company with golden hair and fair complexions. Tea and coffee are placed at one end of the table and served by the governess, and the servants wait on the children. Tea for the grown-up people is served at the same time in a separate apartment, the servants standing behind the buffet to pour out, the gentlemen waiting on the ladies. When the older folk have finished their tea they go into the other room to watch the children having theirs, and when all the cakes are finished a general adjournment is made to the drawing-room, when the games or the dances begin. “Blind-man’s Buff,” “General Post,” “Puss in the Corner”—these have not lost their savour during the many years they have been played; dancing is always delightful, particularly when it begins with the inspiriting polka and ends with Sir Roger de Coverley, or the Swedish dance where half the children kneel and clap their hands, whilst the rest run through their ranks to the top. After the dance there is generally some entertainment in another room—conjuring, “niggers,” “Punch and Judy,” dancing dogs or marionettes—any little entertainment is well received, provided there is a distribution of toys at the end. If a very elaborate way of giving presents is preferred, such as a Christmas tree, fairy cave, or Santa Claus (acted by one

of the family, in a white wig and holly wreath, with a sack of toys presided over by an attendant sprite), no other entertainment is needed, but the presents have to be many and varied if this is to be made a prominent feature. Some slight refreshment is offered before the party breaks up—lemonade, claret cup, sandwiches and cakes. This is served in the tea-room, the servants standing behind the buffet and the grown-up people waiting on the children.

This generally concludes the evening, and the little ones go home to dream of their pleasant party and to wish for another next day.

## WEDDINGS

THE substitution of the wedding-tea for the wedding-breakfast has done away with a good deal of ceremony, but the etiquette to be observed at the church is quite as stringent as formerly. The first person to arrive at the church is the bridegroom, generally accompanied by the best man. Formerly it used to be the custom for the bridegroom to mope near the altar till the arrival of the bride, but now he not infrequently speaks to a few of his friends near the top of the church as they arrive. (It was the Duke of Portland who first made this innovation—but he was a very happy-looking bridegroom, the only one I ever saw who was completely at his ease.) The next people to arrive are the bridesmaids, and they make a little spot of snowy whiteness near the door as though a flock of doves had alighted at the font. The bride's mother generally arrives with the first batch of bridesmaids (if they are sisters of the bride), and the carriage then returns to the house for the bride. The bridesmaids stand in a line on either side to receive the bride, standing in proper order so as to be able to follow her up the aisle. The mother of the bride does not stand near them now as she used to; she takes her place at once at the

top of the church on the right-hand side. The mothers of the other bridesmaids, however, sometimes remain at the bottom of the church for the sake of chaperonage. "Groomsmen" are supposed to be out of date, but the American fashion of "ushers" has found acceptance instead. The ushers should take care to be early—and how welcome they are if they carry out their duties with devotion! The old-fashioned pew-opener's principal idea was to be as unpleasant as possible to the guests who came to a wedding. She might condescend sufficiently to the bride's servants who were placed in the gallery, but she was far from conciliatory to the guests; but the special business of the ushers is to attend to the guests and to see that they are properly placed. Instead of being received by a sour-looking pew-opener the modern guest is received by a smart young man dressed in the latest fashion and bearing the distinguishing mark of a white buttonhole. The usher asks if the guest is the friend of the bride or bridegroom, placing the former on the left-hand side of the aisle and the latter on the right, so that they may find themselves at once amongst friends. All the guests at a wedding should make a point of being punctual, as it is considered rude to arrive later than the bride.

A curious flutter seems to go through the assemblage when the bride arrives. The organ strikes up the wedding march from *Löhengrin*, all heads are turned

towards the porch, and the bridal procession appears!—the bride, in her snow-white finery and gossamer veil, leaning on the right arm of her father (or her guardian, as the case may be). Behind the bride come the bridesmaids, two and two, the chief bridesmaid (generally her sister) walking immediately behind her. If the bride wears a long court train, her pages follow her, holding it up by means of long ribbons; but if her dress is a sensible length, her bridesmaids walk next to her, and the children come last.

The bridegroom stands ready to receive his bride at the foot of the chancel, where the wedding ceremony takes place. The bride stands at his left hand, and her father stands at her left hand to give her away. The best man stands behind the bridegroom, a little to the right. The chief bridesmaid must be ready to receive the bride's bouquet and gloves.

The conclusion of the wedding ceremony (the exhortation, or the sacrament) is only intended for the happy pair, so the bridesmaids should not follow them into the chancel.

At the conclusion of the service the bride takes the left arm of the bridegroom and proceeds towards the vestry, followed by her chief bridesmaid, her parents, the best man, and also by the most distinguished guests. A long interval ensues, during which most of the persons aforesaid are signing their names in the register, and then the wedding march of Mendelssohn crashes

out, and the bride goes down the church with the bridegroom, taking his left arm. The bridesmaids follow her two and two, her mother comes next, and then the guests in whatever order they like. The best man generally stays until the last to assist the guests in getting into their carriages.



## WEDDING TEAS

IN bygone days a wedding was a function to be avoided. A terrible solemnity hung about the proceedings, which made it only second to a funeral in the matter of gloom. There was a solemn and ceremonious meal, followed by sentimental speeches on the part of the elderly relations of the bride; tears were frequently shed at the service, and also during the speeches, and the bride was supposed to leave in floods of tears. The modern wedding is very different from this, and the change is decidedly for the better. Invitations are sent out broadcast to everyone who is interested in the bride or bridegroom; the house is packed to overflowing; there are no tiresome speeches; there are no formalities; everyone is in a good temper, and pleased to be present. The modern wedding is not so expensive as its predecessor, and one is able to invite three times as many people at half the cost! The "sit-down" breakfast was necessarily a very expensive affair, but no one expects very elaborate refreshments at a wedding tea. The refreshments are almost exactly the same as would be given at an ordinary afternoon

party, the only extra expense being the champagne. This is always an expensive item ; still, it is an absolute necessity at a wedding, as one is not supposed to drink the bride's health in any liquor inferior to champagne. The refreshments consist of tea and coffee, every kind of sandwich, rolled bread and butter (white and brown), cakes of every kind, aspic jellies, chicken and game. Sweets and choice fruit may also be added if desired. The buffet is placed at the top of the room or along one side, or it may be L-shaped (occupying two sides of the room) if there are a great number of guests. The servants stand behind the buffet to pour out. The wedding-cake is placed in the centre of the buffet, and the floral decorations should be a prominent feature. Some people prefer to have only white flowers ; others like the admixture of a little colour. White and silver should, however, be the prevailing tones at a wedding buffet ; a white satin or *crêpe* table-spread, embroidered with silver, should be placed under the wedding-cake, with plenty of little heart-shaped silver dishes for sweets. All the furniture must be taken out of the room so that people can circulate freely. Maid-servants can wait behind the buffet, but a man-servant is useful for opening the champagne.

The invitations for a wedding should be sent out from a fortnight to three weeks before the day. The form varies a little according to fashion, sometimes cards are in the ascendant, sometimes

a silver-edged sheet of note-paper, and sometimes a tripartite card with the name of bride and bridegroom on either side and the invitation in the middle. Personally, I prefer a large square "At home" card, as it is easier to stick up over the mantelpiece, so that one can glance at it and remember the date. The wording of the invitation is always the same: "Mr and Mrs Dash request the pleasure of Mr and Mrs Blank's company at the marriage of their daughter Mary with Mr John Asterisk, on May 5th, at St Peter's, Eaton Square, and afterwards at No. 1 Eccleston Square. R.S.V.P."

Everyone who accepts an invitation to a wedding sends a present to the bride, accompanied by a visiting card, with good wishes scribbled at the top. The presents are displayed in one of the reception-rooms, and are classified as far as possible. The silver can be set off by a dark velvet background; the jewellery can be arranged on one table, the fans on another, the card of the donor being always fastened to the gift.

The centre of the room must be left perfectly clear, the tables being arranged round the walls so as to leave plenty of space for circulation. If roses are in season, they may be laid carelessly among the gifts.

The hostess stands close to the drawing-room door at a wedding reception, and shakes hands with all the guests as they enter. When they have congratulated the host and hostess they make

their way towards the bride and bridegroom, who are usually to be found in the centre of the room under the chandelier, or near the fireplace (a nicely-decorated fireplace makes an excellent background for the bride), and when this ceremony is over they make their way to the room in which the wedding presents are exhibited. The bride generally leads the way into the tea-room, the correct order of precedence being as follows:—Bride and bridegroom, bride's father with bridegroom's mother, bridegroom's father with the mother of the bride, best man and chief bridesmaid, the rest of the bridesmaids with the groomsmen. After this there is no precedence observed, but a general *sauve qui peut*.

Long speeches are impossible at a wedding tea, as the people are coming and going all the time. Sometimes the health of the newly-married pair is proposed either by the oldest friend of the family or the most distinguished guest, the bridegroom returning thanks in a few well-chosen words, but more often this ceremony is avoided altogether. After the health of the happy pair has been proposed (or, failing this, after the sweets have been handed), it is the duty of the bride to cut the wedding-cake. She cuts the first slice, or makes some kind of attempt at doing so. The butler then takes the cake to the side-table and cuts up several slices into small pieces, which are put on a plate and handed round to the company. No one must refuse wedding-cake—it is

not etiquette to say no ! The bride now disappears to exchange her snowy robes for a travelling dress, and the happy couple take their leave amidst a shower of congratulations and rice.

## A SILVER WEDDING

THERE are two very obvious objections to the custom of celebrating a silver wedding. In the first place it rather gives one away, as far as age is concerned, and it seems somewhat irrational of a person who has spent the greater part of her life in concealing the ravages of time suddenly to own to the appalling fact that she has been married for twenty - five years. All society women were married at sixteen—that is an acknowledged fact—and their children always look much too old for their age; still, if we add twenty-five to sixteen we produce a sum-total which is not altogether in character with golden locks and skittish ways.

The second objection to the silver wedding is that it seems a little like asking for presents. Everyone who is bidden is supposed to send a gift, and it ought to be in silver. Flowers are allowable as an alternative, and floral decorations are always welcome at a party of this description.

Silver weddings have become very fashionable in spite of the disadvantages above mentioned. A festivity of this kind is necessarily somewhat stately in character, and no expense should be spared in order to make it successful, for it is a thing that can only come once

in a life-time. No one must be left out in the invitations—all the relations and friends must be asked. As people of all ages are invited to the gathering it is, perhaps, a little difficult to hit upon a form of entertainment which will prove equally pleasing to old and young; the problem is sometimes solved by means of a large reception, with music, or else by a dinner, followed by a dance.

Very few people have houses sufficiently large for a reception of this character, but it is becoming more and more the fashion to give parties out-of-doors, and a suite of rooms in an hotel or a picture gallery is usually hired for this purpose.

The invitations are sent out on large cards with silver edges; they are printed in silver, with the initial of the surname at the top, surmounted with a true-lover's knot.

The wording should be as follows: "Mr and Mrs Dash request the pleasure of Mrs Blank's company at dinner on July 30th, at 7.30, at the Savoy Hotel, to celebrate their Silver Wedding." The home address should be printed at the left-hand lower corner, and if there is to be a dance after the dinner, the fact would be announced in the opposite corner as follows:—"Dancing at 11 P.M. Carriages at 3."

"R. S. V. P." should be printed at the right-hand lower corner in any case, and the replies should be sent to the private address.

If the celebration is to take place at home the invitations are sent out on



“At home” cards, and the wording would be—“Mr and Mrs Dash at home to celebrate their Silver Wedding.” The name of both husband and wife should be mentioned in the reply—“Mrs Dash has much pleasure in accepting Mr and Mrs Blank’s kind invitation for July 30th.”

The presents should be sent a little while before the party, in company with the visiting cards of the donors. These presents form an important feature at the party, and are generally arranged in a separate room with the cards attached to them. Some of the floral gifts are put on the dinner-table; others are grouped with the silver.

The dinner-party is much like other dinner-parties, with one important exception—this is about the only occasion on which a husband takes his own wife in to dinner. The wedding-cake is placed in front of the host and hostess, and the latter cuts the first slice, just as she did on her wedding-day, twenty-five years before. The cake is handed at dessert, and this is the signal for the oldest friend of the family to propose the health of the happy couple.

If an afternoon or evening reception were given in place of a dinner, the husband and wife would go in to tea together, or sit next to one another at supper. At a dance they would dance the first number of the programme together.

The customs just mentioned make the entertainment rather difficult to manage, as the host and hostess have

to be so much together instead of separating and looking after their guests in the ordinary way. The eldest son and daughter have to act as a second host and hostess, so as to take a little of the burden of entertainment from the parties most concerned.

## A WOODEN WEDDING

THERE are many objections to the celebration of a Silver Wedding besides those mentioned in the preceding chapter. A good many sad reminiscences must necessarily be connected with an anniversary which takes place after a lapse of twenty-five years. Many faces must be missing from the circle, and the friends who are present only remind one of the friends who are gone. The woman who is well-preserved does not always care to label herself as having been married twenty-five years, and she may also feel a certain delicacy about issuing invitations which demand a silver present from every guest. But none of these things apply to the Wooden Wedding. Only five years need elapse before its celebration; the hymeneal torch has not ceased to burn brightly, and there are not many gaps in the circle of friends, and though a present is expected from each guest, it need only be of wood. It is not necessarily costly, as in the case of the Silver or Golden Wedding. In five years' time the household goods may need a little replenishing, and it is the kindly part of friends to make up for this wear and tear. In primitive times actual neces-

saries formed the usual presents, but at the present day people scour the town for all the *articles de luxe* which can be made in wood. Lovely statuettes, afternoon tea-tables in carved oak, photograph frames made of the bark of a tree, wooden sabots for holding flowers; all these and many other elegant gifts make their appearance at a Wooden Wedding. The presents must not be sent; each guest must bring his present in his hand. This makes the party very amusing, as a fresh surprise comes to the hostess with the arrival of every guest. A Wooden Wedding party always takes place in the evening, the hours being eight to twelve or ten to two, according to taste. In town there is generally no attempt at any entertainment with the exception of conversation. The guests congratulate the host and hostess as they enter, and then amuse themselves with looking at the presents and talking to their various friends. Light refreshments are served in a separate apartment later on, but it is not usual for toasts to be proposed, as in the case of a Silver Wedding. In the country the festivities nearly always conclude with a dance, and in America the floor of the reception-room is covered with shavings by way of being perfectly in character. There is no occasion for a large expenditure of capital either on the part of entertainers or guests; simple presents and a cordial welcome give their own flavour of goodwill to this friendly gathering.

There is a different name for nearly

every anniversary of a wedding day, and there are characteristic gifts for each. The first anniversary is the Cotton Wedding, when chintzes and embroidered chair-backs would be appropriate gifts. The second anniversary is the Paper Wedding—rather a tax on the ingenuity of our friends. Next comes the Leather Wedding after three years of marriage. The fourth year is marked by no particular festivity. To the fifth belongs the Wooden Wedding, above described. No parties now till the seventh anniversary, when the Woollen Wedding speaks of useful things. The Tin Wedding comes after ten years of marriage, when the kitchen utensils stand in need of replenishing. Silk and “fine linen” form the reward of twelve years of marriage, by which time the young matron will appreciate costly attire. Fifteen years bring us to the Crystal Wedding, and twenty to the China one, though the destructiveness of the modern hand-maid would probably necessitate the replenishing of the china closet a good deal sooner. Twenty-five years brings the Silver Wedding, which is such a stately and important ceremonial, and if the married couple are not tired of celebrations, there is the Pearl Wedding after thirty years, the Ruby after forty, the Golden at fifty, and the Diamond after seventy-five years. These anniversaries are not necessarily made the occasion of large gatherings; the Wooden, Silver and Golden Weddings being the ones most usually kept. At

a Golden Wedding the presents are necessarily of a somewhat expensive character, but trophies of yellow flowers may also be offered by guests who are not able to make such costly gifts.

## GARDEN-PARTIES

How nice they can be, and how dull! I have been to both kinds—so have you, gentle reader (to use the quaint apostrophe of the old-fashioned essayist. Why gentle, I wonder? Rapid reader, skipping reader would be more likely to hit the mark in these early century days). I have been at both kinds—charming garden parties where I have enjoyed every minute of the time, and dull functions of which I have repented bitterly during the homeward drive, wondering (like the schoolboy who learnt the alphabet) what induced me to go so far for so little. It is the people that make the difference, I suppose. I have enjoyed myself greatly in a tiny Kensington garden, where I knew every second person, though there was nothing to do but to struggle across the lawn to get some strawberries and cream, and then struggle to get back again. And I have been bored to death in the grandest places, where one had to make a tour of the hot-houses, and admire all the possessions of one's hosts. Not that they were not beautiful, those lakes, those lawns, those conservatories full of hydrangeas, mauve and blue and pink, but that I could have admired them at any time, and the sight of a few melancholy people, smartly



dressed, stalking sadly about the place, did not tend to make things look additionally picturesque. You want a crowd of people to make a garden party pleasant; they must also be the right kind of people, and all fairly in the same set, or else the affair will not be enjoyable. It is not usual to make introductions at a garden party—scarcely possible, indeed, in large grounds—so the visitors have to depend on themselves a good deal, and they like to go to places where they are likely to meet plenty of people they know. I can remember plenty of garden parties which deserved to be classed as social events—those given by Lady Currie (“Violet Fane”), when she lived in town, and the delightful lawn parties given by “John Strange Winter” in the old days at Putney.

When it is necessary to invite huge crowds of people, it is best to provide plenty of amusements, such as military bands, glee singers, dancing dogs, performing ponies, palmistry, etc., so that people cannot help being entertained. The garden party given by the Rothschilds at Gunnersbury during the Women’s Congress was a striking example of a success of this kind. Many people said that it was the best of all the parties given to the Delegates—the entertainment was so lavish, and the choice of amusements so varied—there was even a circus in one part of the grounds, with a famous equestrienne performing wonderful feats on a bare-backed horse.

We cannot all afford to entertain in this gorgeous fashion, but there is no occasion to have a dull garden party because our grounds are small. It ought to be easier to look after people when they are all together in a small space; a party ought never to be dull under these conditions. It is always so pleasant to be out-of-doors on a fine summer afternoon, surrounded with trees and flowers. Tea in a tent is far more enjoyable than in a drawing-room, and a party of people dressed in light summer frocks is always a pretty sight. Where so many elements of success are assured, the host and hostess may labour with a gay heart, feeling that the chances are all in their favour. Whether the party is large or small, the palmist should not be forgotten. A weird lady in a tent is certain to be an enormous attraction, and dull people will stand for hours in a *queue* waiting to hear about their innocent past and their uneventful future.

Invitations are sent out from three weeks to a month before the day; large square "At home" cards are generally used. In the country it is customary to add the words "and party" after the name of the *invité*, but this is not possible in town.

At small garden parties tea is sometimes served in the house, as at an ordinary "At home," but refreshments out-of-doors are always much preferred. The hostess stands at the upper end of the lawn to receive her guests, so that they may find her at once.

The guests shake hands with their hostess as soon as they arrive, and introduce any friends whom they have brought. They then pass on into the garden, and proceed to explore its beauties and greet their various friends. People do not wait to be asked to take refreshments at a garden-party, they make their way to the tent whenever they like, and ask the servants for what they want. The servants stand behind the buffet, pouring out tea and coffee. It is usual to take leave of the hostess. There is no occasion to call after a garden party, but people sometimes leave their cards on the way out.

## CHRISTMAS PARTIES

CHRISTMAS is a great time for non-descript entertainments, and the hostess often finds some little difficulty in thinking of amusements in which all the company can join. People of all ages are invited to these parties, and the games have to be chosen chiefly with a view to the younger members of the company, who are home for their holidays and anxious to sit up till unheard-of hours. Children reign supreme at Christmas time, and we must all do our best to please them, so it behoves us to join in the games with the best possible grace, without exhibiting the least sign of being bored. The French are superior to ourselves concerning what the *parvenu* called *jew de society*. They can be children for the nonce with an excellent grace, because they are utterly devoid of the fear of looking ridiculous. We should do well to imitate our lively neighbours in this respect, so as not to be any longer open to the reproach of taking our pleasures sadly. When we go out to Christmas parties we are expected to join in all manner of extraordinary diversions, and though it may not be exactly pleasant to anyone after the age of twenty to have to sit on the stool of repentance or to bite an inch off a red-hot poker, we must do these things with a cheerful face if we are

asked. Never is the term of "assisting" at an entertainment more truly applicable than at a Christmas party. We must all do our best to make the game go well, feeling determined that it shall not be our fault if it falls flat. It is not given to us all to be able to introduce a new game, but we can at least follow the lead with a cheerful spirit, and give our whole minds to mastering its details.

The invitations are generally sent out through the medium of a friendly note, so that people may understand the informal nature of the party. For example: "The children have come home for the holidays, and are longing to have a little fun. Will you all come in on Thursday evening about eight? We are going to play games." Or, "Will you come in on the 31st, and see the old year out with us, if you have no better engagement?" The answer would be informal also, and it will be thoughtful in the guest to mention the number of the people she intends to bring. "We shall all be delighted to come," she will say, "that is, myself and the three children, if you think we shall not be too many." *Demi-toilette* is generally worn at a party of this character, a square bodice or evening blouse being more correct than full dress. Bright colours look well at a party of this kind; bright faces I have already insisted on. The room should be gaily decorated; long swags of evergreens caught up in the centre and at each side with a bow of red or blue ribbon help to give a cheerful effect,

and the manufacture of these garlands affords occupation for the children for days beforehand. The garlands can be arranged in festoons on the walls over the mantelpiece, or above the folding-doors, the lines of the architecture being carefully followed. Coloured wax candles look pretty at Christmas, particularly when they are of the same tint as the ribbon which ties up the festoons.

Tea and coffee are handed round on arrival (or served in a separate room if preferred), and an adjournment to the supper-room should take place at about eleven, plenty of Christmas dainties being served. The table should be decorated with holly berries, scarlet lamp and candle shades, and a red satin table centre. Funny little figures may be placed about the table centre, or in the middle of the fruit dishes: red goblins, Santa Clauses, old Father Christmases or robin redbreasts. Cracker bon-bons, "kisses," sweetmeats with mottoes on them—all these things may find a place on the table, anything that makes fun and promotes conversation. Supper may be sit-down or stand-up as preferred; in the latter case the table would be placed at one side of the room, the servants standing behind it. Sandwiches, patties, and aspic jellies would be the principal eatables at a stand-up supper; but the sweets would naturally be made a feature of at a party of this character.

I will not conclude this chapter without giving suggestions as to the games,

as they may possibly be useful to some of my readers. If the party begins early, there will be a good deal of time to fill up, so it is better to divide the evening into two, playing quiet games first and lively ones afterwards. There are a number of games which can be played with paper and pencil round a table; and some of these are really very amusing. Long strips of paper and a Japanese tray full of pencils ready pointed should be ready beforehand, so that time need not be wasted before beginning.

"Sixpenny Telegrams" is a very ingenious game. Twelve members of the party give a letter in turn, which each player must copy in the same order. The letters form the initials of the twelve words which form the telegram, and ten minutes is allowed for the construction of the sentence. Supposing the letters are A, J, W, L, O, D, T, P, F, I, A, O, the sentence might run like this: "Aunt Jemima's wig left on dressing-table, please forward it at once." All the sentences are read aloud at the end of ten minutes, and a prize is sometimes given for the best.

"Consequences" is always amusing when the players know one another. The words are written down in the following order: adjective, gentleman's name, adjective, lady's name; where they met, what they were doing, what he said to her, what she said to him, what the consequence was, and what the world said. If it is desired to lengthen it, what he gave her and what she gave



him may be added. The first player writes the name down at the top of a long slip of paper, folds it down, and hands it to the next person, and so on till all have done. The folded papers are now all thrown down together on the table or on the floor; one of the players then picks them up and reads them aloud for the benefit of the company.

“Making your Will” is rather a good game. It is played as follows: One of the party must be the lawyer, and his first duty is to write down a list of twelve articles of general property, numbering each as he goes on. Anything funny may be put into the list, such as her false hair, her bicycle, her manuscript, her love-letters, her last year’s gown. When the list is finished the lawyer says to his client, “Whom will you leave No. 1 to?” The client names anyone at random, and her reply is written down opposite to the numeral mentioned. She has not the least idea what articles are written on the list, and when it is read aloud is amused to hear that she has left her false hair to her baldheaded uncle and her manuscripts to the Idiot Asylum.

“Trades” is a very easy game, such as little children can play. I came upon it the other day in *Every Girl’s Book*. Each child chooses a trade, and the person who sits at the top of the table is called the president. She copies a short anecdote out of a book, and whenever she comes to a noun she must point at one of the children, who must say a noun which belongs to his trade,

and this must be written down instead of the proper word. The president then reads the sentences aloud, and if it makes nonsense they must each pay a forfeit.

"Twenty Questions" is always fresh and interesting, and it can be made more of if it is played in the following manner: The company should be divided into two clubs, each sitting round in a circle; two players must be sent out of the room, and the clubs must decide upon the word to be guessed. Something pretty difficult should be fixed upon, if most of the players are adults, but if the players are children it is best to fix upon something in the room. The two who are to guess are now called in, and one sits down in the centre of each circle. "Is it this? Is it that?" they eagerly ask, the club answering "Yes" or "No." The one who guesses it first is claimed by the other club, and makes one of their circle. One of the first circle then goes out along with the bad guesser. The game is supposed to go on till one of the clubs has absorbed all the members of the other.

## A NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

A HOSTESS requires to be full of resource to give a successful New Year's Eve party, because, whether her guests are bored or not, they cannot possibly leave before twelve. Now, human nature is strange. We have the authority of the elder Mr Weller for that statement. "Human nature, Samivel, is a rum 'un." So, though human nature would like to sit up till twelve o'clock 364 days of the year, the chances are it will be terribly bored if it is not sufficiently entertained on this one particular evening.

I, who always love to talk—more particularly the last thing at night—*moi qui vous parle*—have I not sat on Christmas Day feeling as if conversation was impossible to me; and have I not sincerely wished to go to bed at nine o'clock on New Year's Eve? Yes, it is perversity, and there is nothing which can account for it; however, the fact remains, the hostess must provide plenty of entertainment if she is to keep us amused till twelve o'clock on New Year's Eve.

Dancing is, perhaps, the best way of passing the time, for the hours pass by fleetly enough with the dancers, and the band can strike up "Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot?" when the psychological moment arrives. But a

party of this kind is generally made up of such incongruous elements with regard to ages and tastes that, although an impromptu dance may be attempted with advantage, a settled programme might not always be a success.

Flexibility should be the ideal of the entertainment for the New Year's Eve party; a little of one thing and a little of another; games in which all can join, so that the children shall not be disappointed and the old people shall not feel they are left out.

The guests must be carefully selected for a party of this kind. The hostess must gather round her all her nearest and dearest relations and intimate friends, everyone with whom she is in sympathy, and there should not be a jarring note in the circle.

Invitations are sent out through the medium of the friendly note; formal invitations are not sent except in the case of a dance. The house is sure to look festive, as the Christmas decorations are still up, and "Welcome" in holly leaves might be added to the hall for the occasion. Mere boughs of holly are stiff and undecorative in themselves, but most beautiful effects can be obtained by threading the leaves separately, and making them up into garlands. Green thread is the best thing to use for this purpose, the leaves put on one by one, and the long ropes of foliage can be made into all kinds of beautiful designs, the "swag" of Georgian times being the most successful model. The long festoon should be caught in the centre with a

bow of pale blue satin ribbon, and again at the two sides, which should droop gracefully. Garlands of this kind look well over mantelpieces and doorways, and smaller wreaths can be twined round chandeliers. The house should look as light and bright as possible, and both hostess and guests should don their brightest attire.

Tea and coffee should be served to the guests as soon as they arrive, and supper should be announced at eleven o'clock. A sit-down supper is not possible with a large party of this kind; the ladies generally sit round the room, and are waited on by the gentlemen. The supper-table should be decorated as brightly as possible—red wax candles and candle shades, a red and gold table-centre, holly in all the vases, or shaded foliage in the new red ware. A little fancy may be indulged in on an occasion of this kind; there may be little red goblins for menu-holders, or Christmas robins perched among the table decorations, with scarlet “kisses,” and bonbons.

Little presents are often given at a party of this kind, not the stereotyped gifts of Christmas, given with conscientious care, lest anyone should be left out, but gay little gifts, presented after the fashion of a cotillon, with everything left to chance. Sometimes a “Tangle Party” is organised, two long, coloured ribbons being wound round the house from basement to garret, with a present attached to the end; sometimes there are gifts placed in birds’ nests, and

the company is started to search for them at a given signal; and yet "another way," as they say in the cookery-books. The carpet is turned up (an easy process if an Eastern square is employed), a circle is made with chalk in the centre of the floor, four lines are then drawn across it, and a present of some description is placed in each compartment. (It is easy enough to find suitable things if one pays a visit to the nearest silver-smiths.)

The company take turns in endeavouring to find the present; each person is blindfolded in turn and supplied with a stick, and he is supposed to set off in a straight line, and to put the end of the stick in the compartment where the present is placed. Does he often reach it? Not at all. People stop long before the mystic circle is reached; to get to the centre and triumphantly reach the spoil is only given to the few.

Pretty little prizes, calendars, photo-frames, tiny silver ornaments and the like may be given to the winners in the various games which are played during the earlier part of the evening, and all these things lend interest to the games, and help to make the time pass pleasantly. If there are many children and young people in the company, runabout games will be preferred, such as "Dumb Crambo," "Blindman's Buff," "General Post" and "Charades"; but quiet games are liked for a change, and there are many amusing ones which can be played with no other apparatus than pencil and paper. If the party is a large

one, it is easy to divide it into sections, so many people to each table. "Consequences" is always popular if people know one another sufficiently well. "Sixpenny Telegrams" causes great amusement if the players are sharp, and there are several good drawing games, more particularly one in which each person draws an incident in history, and his neighbours have to write the correct title underneath. Rhyming games are in favour just now. "Limericks" can be made on a given subject, a prize being awarded for the best, or couplets can be made in a given time on some member of the company, or on a popular actor or other well-known character. Home truths are often conveyed in these poetical efforts, as in the following one, made by a lad when the word "father" was given as the subject:—

"He's very fond of generous fare,  
But mostly wants what isn't there."

The accuracy of this description was vouched for by the roars of laughter which greeted the reading of the couplet. An impromptu dance makes a pleasant change after supper, and there are worse ways of spending the last moments of the year than dancing it out with a favourite partner. After this comes the ceremony of the "First Foot"—a notion which we borrow from the Scotch. The Scotch attach great importance to the personality of the being who is the first to cross the threshold after the coming of the new year; it should not be a



woman, nor a fair-haired man, and he must not come empty-handed. His name must not be William—the Immortal Bard might have knocked at the door in vain, for no one would accept him as a “first foot.” To ensure good luck for the coming year, one of the guests is sent out with a bottle of wine and a glass, or a piece of bread, and bidden to knock at the front door. When he comes in he wishes everyone a Happy New Year, and good wishes are exchanged all round. If he brings wine there is generally a great drinking of healths in the hall, followed by the singing of “Auld Lang Syne”; but wine is not a necessity. My Scotch friend tells me that a scone or part of a loaf is every bit as good. It does not matter what he brings, so long as he does not come empty-handed. In Scotch villages, she says, there will often be a rush of neighbours and friends coming to the door at this mystic hour, almost falling over one another in their anxiety to be “first foot.”

## A "WHITE PARTY"

NOVELTIES in entertainment are always welcome, and the "White Party" is the latest addition to the ranks. The *bâl blanc* owes its origin to our lively neighbours, who give this name to a dance devoted to young unmarried people, at which no flirting matron may intrude. The young ladies appear in white dresses, the young men in ordinary evening dress, with the addition of white waistcoats and white buttonholes. Only white flowers are allowed in the decoration of the ballroom and buffets, and the programmes are painted with lilies.

A very pretty "White Party" was given in town a little while since, and it may perhaps be interesting if I give an account of it, as it may suggest ideas to other hostesses. All the guests were children (with the exception of a few grown-up people, who were invited to look on). The invitations were sent out in the name of the children of the house, "White Party" was written in one corner, "Domino Masks" being added underneath. The hours were five till ten.

When the guests arrived they were shown into the tea-rooms, the grown-up people taking their tea in one room and the children in another. There was no sit-down tea, for even the tiniest children seemed to prefer to have tea at a buffet.

All the little girls came in white—some in fancy dress with powdered hair, some as fairies, some in white muslin or chiffon. The little boys wore Eton suits with white buttonholes, the very small ones appearing in white corduroy velvet suits or white silk sailor-clothes. The little girl of the house appeared in two different dresses during the course of the evening; first in a low-necked frock of white chiffon, and afterwards in an Empire dress of white soft silk, made with a short bodice and long train, with white chrysanthemums arranged at each side of her head *à la* Jap.

All the little guests arrived in domino masks; the children of the house wore them also, and the order was given that the masks should be retained whilst the engagements for dancing were being made, and not removed till the end of the first dance. (This made a great deal of amusement, but it would be still more amusing in the case of grown-up people, to whom the choice of the right partner is a more vital matter.) After a couple of waltzes had been danced the cotillon commenced, and a number of pretty figures were introduced. The first figure was the "Fisher Maiden." A little girl stood on a chair, armed with a fishing-rod with a sweet biscuit fastened to the end for bait. All the little boys who wanted to dance with her swarmed round the chair, and tried to catch the biscuit in their mouths, and the successful competitor was rewarded with the hand of the lady. Needless

to say that the fisher-maid dangled the rod at a fearful height till the favourite partner appeared! The next figure was "The Air-Balls." The hostess appeared with a great group of air-balls, carefully held in the centre by the strings, and she gave one to each little girl with the simple instruction, "Run about and let a little boy catch you." The little girl took the ball by the string and refused to be caught till the right partner came along—the one who could catch the flying ball and break it between his two hands. The sounds of the bursting balls seemed to be most inspiring to the dancers, who waltzed on more gaily than ever amidst the ruins they had made.

Next came the "Sacks of Flour"—and this was the most successful figure of all. Two very large sacks were to be found on the landing, in the care of the leaders of the cotillon, and two boys stepped into the sacks, which were then tied up at the top. All the little girls stood at one side of the room, whilst the mysterious figures passed before them. If one of the little girls thought the sack contained her favourite partner she caught hold of it, when it was promptly thrown off, and the two went waltzing off together. This figure was continued for some time, as all the little boys were wild to get into the sack!

After this came the "Maypole." There were two tall sticks provided with lengths of coloured ribbons, and one of the tallest children stood in the centre, holding the stick, whilst the

others caught hold of the ends of the ribbons and ran round. The little boys ran round one of the Maypoles, the little girls round the other, and the effect of the bright-coloured ribbons held by the white-clad figures was exceedingly good. At a given signal the music suddenly stopped, and each little boy had to dance with the little girl who was holding the same coloured ribbon as himself. (Two grown-up people, a lady and a gentleman, were leading the cotillon, and they clapped their hands when they wanted the music to stop.) Next came the "Military Decorations." The little girls were provided with medals and orders, in tinsel and metal, and told to pin them to the coat of the person they wanted to dance with. The boys were next provided with buttonholes of white flowers, which they had to bestow on the partner they desired. Next came the distribution of gifts which invariably forms the conclusion of the cotillon. These gifts may be simple or costly, according to taste, but a very simple gift will please a child. Tiny sets of note-books for cash, mems and addresses, little photograph-frames, sets of pencils and pencil-cases — all these things are welcomed by children when they get them at the end of the cotillon. At the "White Party" I speak of the presents were brought in in a very effective way. The two leaders of the cotillon came in in large white dominoes, bearing two silver vases full of lottery tickets, which they proceeded to hand, in perfect silence, to each little

child in turn. They then disappeared, and re-entered, each bearing a tray covered with little gifts done up in white notepaper, with a number written on each, corresponding to the numbers which had been taken from the silver vase. The children were charmed with the presents which came to them in such a mysterious way, and the evening concluded with a Swedish dance, after which a sit-down supper was served. The table was decorated with low round baskets full of white tulips, and hanging balls of flowers were to be seen in the centre of the folding-doors, between curtains of smilax. The "White Party" was a great success and a very pretty sight. White was not worn by the hostess or the onlookers; grown-up people wear day-dress at affairs of this kind, because they are only invited as spectators.

## “AT HOME” EVENINGS

EVENINGS AT HOME we know all about, but “At home” Evenings are (like the cousin in the ballad) “a different thing.” An “At home” Evening is a little innovation recently introduced by some kindly hostess who had the intention of brightening up the winter—a thing which is specially needed in the suburbs.

No expensive refreshments are looked for at a party of this kind, nor is very much entertainment anticipated; people simply come out for the pleasure of seeing the hostess and meeting mutual friends, and they do not expect the elaborate entertainments which are given in the season. An evening at home is sometimes substituted for a “day,” and it does not demand a call afterwards, as it is itself something in the nature of a call. Once a month is often enough for an evening of this character, and it is as well to keep an afternoon in addition for the sake of people who prefer to call at that time. The invitations are usually sent out on visiting cards, it is more unpretentious; but they can be sent out on large square cards if desired, all the dates being on one card in either case. The dates should be printed or written under the day. Supposing that first Monday



is printed on the card, the hostess would write the dates underneath: January 3rd, February 7th, March 7th, adding 9—12 or 9.30—1, as preferred. I think twelve is late enough for a party of this character, where no regular supper is given—only light refreshments—and I should think it would be wiser not to invite people to come from a distance, but to make it, as far as possible, a meeting-place for those who live in the same place. Sometimes a stranger comes in to an affair of this kind like the olive in the banquet, the spice in the dish, and one must secure any attraction one can find for a party of this description, but I think it should be mainly an affair for the people of the neighbourhood, who can come to a modest entertainment without much trouble or expense. The hostess is at home for the evening, and it all depends on her powers of attraction whether the evening goes off brilliantly or tamely. An attractive woman is a great “drawing power”—she who is never at a loss under any circumstances, but makes the most of everything, just as it turns up. Conversation is the main idea of the gathering, but a little good music might make an agreeable change. Or a fortune-teller! People are so keenly interested in their individual fates! Nothing is so interesting as one’s self! One’s past—one’s future! We are all anxious to hear about this, and we like to hear what the sooth-sayer can tell us, whether she predicts it through the crystal or the cards, or

through the lines of the hand (though this is a little out of fashion). There is often great jealousy as to who should first approach the soothsayer, so the best method of procedure is to allow the precedence to be settled by chance. The hostess should hand round a hand of cards, saying that the person who takes the highest heart should go first, and so on with the next deal. By this means everyone is pleased, and it is evident that no favouritism is shown. Some fortune-tellers deal out cards to a circle of young people round a table; the cards are circular in shape, and put round in a circle; everyone sits or kneels round the table so as to form a circle, the cards are taken up in turn, and after three rounds the soothsayer predicts the fortunes of each person. It would, perhaps, be better to have no fixed plan of entertainment for parties of this character. Variety would be the one thing needful, and the hostess might have music, cards, fortune-telling, games, according to the fancy of the moment. Anything to make the time pass pleasantly. Conversation is, however, the main object of these gatherings, and if people are already acquainted they will always amuse themselves, whilst if they are not, plenty of introductions should be effected, as they help to make an evening a success. Refreshments are served at eleven o'clock, an adjournment to the dining-room being proposed when everything is ready, the host leading the way with the most

distinguished lady present. Tea and coffee are served by a maid-servant standing behind the buffet; claret-cup, lemonade, and plain claret in glass jugs are to be found at another table, or on the sideboard, together with sandwiches of every description, sweets, and *petits fours*, the gentlemen waiting on the ladies. The party disperses after supper, and cordial farewells are given to the hostess who has provided such a pleasant evening.

## WINTER PARTIES

A GOOD deal of apologetic entertaining goes on in London during the winter, but the hostess is always careful to show that she has no intention of rivalling the grand social functions of the season. The invitations are not sent out very long beforehand, and there is no attempt at costliness in the entertainment.

The winter is not the time for grand balls and stately dinners, or for crowded receptions, with everything lavishly done; it is the time for cosy little dinners and theatre parties, for little dances and small and early evenings. The hostess adopts an apologetic tone when speaking of her parties. "I am trying to brighten up the winter," she says, with the light of pure self-sacrifice and benevolence shining in her face. She gives cosy afternoons in her dimly-lighted salons, the pink-shaded lights throwing a soft halo over everything. She makes no attempt at entertainment in the way of music, but there is possibly a palmist hidden in a dim corner in case anyone is inclined to consult the fates. Conversation is the principal object of the gathering, and the people who are passing through town are glad to exchange greetings with those who have settled down for the winter.

These parties are often very agree-

able. People are able to stay longer than they would do in the season, when there are always so many places to go on to, and there is an air of sociability and homeliness about a winter party which is often missing from the smarter gatherings which take place during the season.

There is a touch of affectation about the way in which the smart London hostess talks about "brightening up the winter," for one knows she is living right in the centre of things, and has no occasion whatever to feel dull. But the dreariness of winter is an undoubted fact in the suburbs, and the hostess who makes an effort to struggle against it is a real benefactress to the community. The young people of the neighbourhood are only too thankful for an excuse to get out in the winter evenings, whether it is for rehearsing amateur theatricals, or practising some choral or orchestral work, or for an informal dance. It is always better to have an object for country or suburban parties, or else they are liable to fall flat. The best London parties are those at which there is no entertainment offered, where people are simply let alone and allowed to talk, but I don't think this applies to the country. When there is only a narrow circle, and people meet frequently, and know one another well, a little artificial stimulus is needed in order to make a party go off well.

A "Book Badge Party" is one of the latest novelties in entertaining, and gives plenty of scope for the inventive powers. The invitations are sent out

on ordinary "At home" cards, with "Book Badge Party" written in one corner. Every guest is expected to come as a living enigma, the solution of which must be the title of some well-known book. Each person is provided with a card, ruled down the centre, and on this he must inscribe the names of his fellow-guests and the title of the works they are supposed to represent. A prize is given to the person who guesses most of the living riddles, such as a small article of jewellery or a silver ornament for the toilet table. It is allowable to ask a guest for his own name, but not for the name of the book he represents. At a recent party of this kind some very clever riddles were propounded. One young lady wore a ticket on her hat with the word "stood" upon it. She was meant for "Miss-understood." Another girl wore a razor and a pair of scissors suspended on a long gold chain. This symbolised "With Edged Tools." A gentleman symbolised "Nicholas Nickleby" by wearing a nickel silver "S" on one lapel and a "B" on the other. The cleverest conundrum was provided by the wife of a well-known editor, who symbolised "Locke on the Human Understanding" by the simple expedient of wearing a padlock on her shoe!

"Progressive Whist" forms another amusing way of spending an evening, and the prizes that are given add a little interest to the game. The invitations are sent out on large "At home"

cards, with " Progressive Whist " written in one corner. When the guests arrive they are shown into the tea-room, and each gentleman is presented to the lady who is to be his first partner in the game. When tea is over, the company proceed to the drawing-room, where a number of little whist-tables are set out, and the proceedings commence. One hand is played, and at the conclusion of it the persons who have lost get up and move to the next table. The points are marked on a card after each game, each couple keeping to the same card at whichever table they play. At the end of the evening a prize is given to the winning couple, and there is also a booby prize for those who have the lowest score. The scoring cards are supplied by the hostess. Sometimes they are made like dance programmes, with a pencil attached ; sometimes the games are marked by means of coloured wafers. Occasionally a club is formed during the winter for the playing of this game, the entertainment taking place in different houses in turn. A small subscription (such as a shilling a member) is given in this case, the money to be devoted to the purchase of prizes.



## “ PROGRESSIVE HEARTS ”

A NEW kind of party is always in favour in the country—not a costly entertainment, but some little object for spending an evening in company. In town, people are only too pleased to meet without any other object than conversation ; but in the country, people like something else besides the dear delight of hearing themselves talk. It is for this reason that I am always on the look-out for novel forms of entertainment, feeling sure there are many of my readers who will be glad to give them a trial.

The great difficulty in a country place is to think of some amusement which will be equally pleasing to people of every age. Dancing is delightful for young people, but very dull work for those who have to look on ; besides, giving a dance entails a good deal more trouble than the heads of the house are always inclined to undertake. It should not be much trouble when there is a parquet floor, but if it entails taking up of carpets, or nailing down of crumb-cloths, it is a little more tiresome than our enthusiastic daughters would wish us to believe. So we must try to think of some entertainment which will pass the evening pleasantly without shaking the household to its very foundations for days before and after.

"Progressive Whist" was so much liked when it was first introduced that a successor has been found in "Progressive Hearts," which is a trifle more frivolous, and even more successful.

The invitations are sent out as for an ordinary "At home," only that "Progressive Hearts" is written in one corner of the card. The guests are received in the tea-room, and each gentleman is introduced by the host or hostess to the lady who is to be his first partner. The game is played in the drawing-room, where a number of little tables are prepared as if for whist. There are four players at each table. There are no trumps in this game, and the great thing is to avoid keeping any hearts, and one can throw away a heart when one cannot follow suit (getting rid of the highest ones first). One must follow suit as long as one can, but after this one can throw away hearts. Hearts cannot be led till after the sixth round, and then one would only lead them if one had a small card, so that someone else would take the trick. After each game, the players count up their heart cards, and those who have none or the lowest number go to the next table. If two players have the same number, they cut to tell which shall go.

This goes on until the "gold table" is reached—the goal of ambition in this game. In the centre is a little silver dish containing several gold bows, and the lowest scorers pin on one of the

bows, and remain at the table and play. The one who can remain longest at this table wins a prize, as the bows are counted afterwards, and the one who has the greatest number wins. The first prize is given to the one who has the least number of hearts scored on his card, the second to the person with the greatest number of gold bows, and the player who is left with the greatest number of hearts is consoled by a booby prize. Neat little scoring cards are placed at each table. A bell is rung when it is time for the players to move on to the next table. Sometimes the host and hostess do not play, so that the hostess can ring the bell and see that the players go to the right tables, and the host can assist them in making up their scores.

The prizes are usually some of those silver articles which are so pretty and so cheap. Sweetmeat-boxes or match-boxes always please. Cigarette-cases are nice, but it is best to get presents which suit equally well whether the winner be a lady or a gentleman. When the prizes have been distributed the host leads the way into supper with his last partner (supposing he has been playing), otherwise with the lady of highest rank. The other gentlemen go in with their last partner, and those who have won prizes together always love to talk it over afterwards. The supper is generally served on a buffet, the gentlemen waiting on the ladies. If a sit-down supper is given, the tables may be decorated in various styles for

the accommodation of the winners. One table can be done with gold, another with silver, and the rest with scarlet. The gold is carried out by means of gold-coloured Salviati glass, gold tissue table-centre, and gold-coloured chrysanthemums; the silver one can have a silver table-centre and mauve or white flowers, whilst the other tables can be decorated with scarlet geraniums and red candle-shades, with *menus* like the ace of hearts, and heart-shaped dishes full of sweets. The guests usually leave soon after supper, unless the hostess chooses to wind up with an *impromptu* dance.

## A DEVICE PARTY

THE DEVICE PARTY is the successor to the Book Badge Party, and it is carried out in much the same way. Each member of the company must appear with an emblematical device, suspended from the buttonhole or hanging round the neck, the attempt to unravel their meaning being the principal occupation of the evening. The solutions are written down on cards, prizes being given to those who have guessed the greatest number correctly. The invitations are sent out on ordinary "At home" cards, with "Device Party" written in one corner, and underneath must be written the kind of device required, such as "Botanical," "Geographical," "Animal," "Birds, Beasts and Fishes," "Theatrical," "Celebrities," or "Men of Note." The hours may be four to seven, or eight to twelve, as preferred, tea being given in one case and sandwiches and claret-cup in the other. Each guest is presented with a card with a pencil attached to it, after the fashion of a dance programme. There should be as many numbers printed on the card as there are people present, with a blank left opposite each. At the top of the card or outside it should be a single number, and this is to signify the number which the owner is to be known by to the guessers of

the riddles. No introductions are required at this party, and that is the principal advantage it possesses, as there is no possibility of stiffness, and everybody gets sociable at once. Without any knowledge of the personality addressed any member of the party may go up to any other, and take up the device which is being worn and say, "Excuse me, may I look at this?" Then it will be, "I can't find it out!" or else, "I think I know what it is—do you mind coming this way whilst I ask you if I have guessed it?" And then the two will go and whisper in a corner of the room, or in the bay window, or even out in the hall, so that no one else shall hear the solution of the riddle. It is not allowable to tell what the device is meant for, or to give any clue, but it is necessary to say "yes" when anyone has guessed correctly.

When a player has guessed the riddle he writes down the answer on his programme opposite the figure which belongs to the person who has propounded it. Some people prefer a double card, so that they can write the name of the person opposite the device, but it is not at all necessary—it is much easier to call them No. 1 or No. 2, as the case may be.

When people get tired of guessing the riddles the hostess collects all the cards, and counts up the number of successful solutions, and awards the prizes to those who have guessed the most. Two prizes are generally given,

one to a lady and one to a gentleman, and some people add a booby prize for the person who has guessed the least. A box of cigarettes is generally given to the gentleman, and a box of sweets to the lady; silver articles are also suitable for prizes, such as match-boxes, yard-measures, photo frames, or ornaments for the toilet-table. The prizes need not be costly, as it is quite a young people's party, got up for the fun of the thing.

A friend of mine has brightened up the winter with a succession of Device Parties of various kinds, and she tells me that people love to come to them, even more than to dances, and that it is delightful to see how quickly all the guests get to know one another—there is no dull time at the beginning of the evening.

I will give examples of some of the devices which caused the most amusement at the time, either by their ingenuity or their audacity. The Geographical evening was one of the best. One guest appeared with two shillings hanging from his buttonhole, and explained that this signified the Bosphorus, as "Bobs" was "the Boss for us!" A married couple appeared with a card suspended round the neck of each; one card bore a picture of a Christmas pudding, uncut, the other showed the pudding plate with nothing left in it but a sprig of holly. This was intended to signify "Eton" and "Nuneaton." The pretty daughter of the house wore a card with nothing but



the word "In" written upon it. No one could guess what it meant, and when at last people said to her, "I give it up—what is it?" she replied, with a sweetly serene smile, "It is In, dear!" (India). She played much the same trick at the Animal Party, having a picture of a little man with an umbrella as her device, and blandly remarking that it was the "rain, dear" (reindeer). The hostess's device showed a sketch of a farmyard, with two roosters and some hens and chickens, and this was meant to imply "A cockatoo" (a cock or two). At a Vegetable Party one young lady wore no badge at all, and afterwards explained that "Carrots" was plainly signified by her auburn hair. Another young lady appeared wearing a photograph of her father, with a little bit nipped out at one side. This baffled all observers for some time, but was gradually recognised to be "parsnip."

At the Flowers and Fruit Party one ingenious girl wore several rows of minnikin pins at one side of her bodice (just as one buys them on green paper), and this, of course, meant the Queen of Flowers (rose). Two gentlemen arrived together with pins sticking out of the lapels of their coat in every direction, which, being interpreted, meant a "prickly pear!" Very original was the gentleman who came into the Historical Party with a live newt in a small milk-can. By this laborious method he signified "Canute!"

Names of plays make excellent devices, but the supply of titles is rather

soon exhausted. At the parties I am describing a lady and gentleman came with no other badge than their visiting card, with the address of the Mansions in which they lived. This signified "Our Flat." A nought in the centre of a card, scribbled all round with pencil, meant "Much Ado about Nothing," and a picture of five comic heads, two with large ears and three with none, signified "Three must get ears!" (Three Musketeers). The same play was once symbolised at another party by three of the guests rushing wildly into the room when they arrived; this meant, "Three must get 'ere!"

"Peony" was rendered at the Floral Party by the letter P on the top of a large E, and an ingenious riddle was made on the word "lioness" by one of the hostess's daughters. She wrote something, which was obviously untrue, on her card, and put it on the top of a large S. This, she explained, meant "Lie on S" (lioness). The untruth she selected was, "I am absolutely without faults," which, as she remarked, must be untrue of anybody. But she was such an exceptionally pretty girl, that I told her that "I am dreadfully plain" would have been a more obvious misstatement of fact.

## THEATRE PARTIES

A THEATRE party is one of the pleasantest forms of what one might almost call "Outdoor entertaining," a fashion which is rapidly becoming a powerful factor in modern life. A large dinner-party at home is an impossibility when people live in a small flat, and a dinner at a smart restaurant makes a pleasant change from the ordinary routine. Then a party of this kind can be got up at the shortest notice, the length of the invitation only depending on the popularity of the chosen play. People who are passing through town always like to see the piece which is being talked about at the moment, and country cousins will be able to take useful hints from the dresses worn on the stage. When one is inviting Londoners it is best to find out what plays they have seen, but if it is not possible to discover this, it is as well to take tickets for one of the musical plays that no one minds seeing for the second time, such as any of the pieces at Daly's or the Savoy. Other things being equal, it is best to chose a play - which does not begin too early, so that dinner has not to be too much hurried over. The guests should make a point of being punctual, as there is

never any time to waste on an occasion of this kind.

The invitations are given through the medium of a friendly note, and the guests are generally invited to meet their entertainers a little before seven in the entrance hall of the restaurant, unless there is a reception-room provided for this purpose. Most people like the entrance hall best, as it is amusing to watch the gay parties of people passing through. The host and hostess remain in the entrance till all the party have arrived, when they proceed to the dining-room which they have engaged beforehand. The host leads the way into the room, so that his guests have not to hunt about for the table where they are to sit.

If the hostess wishes to do the thing very thoroughly she will give orders to a fashionable florist to decorate the table, and also to place a beautiful buttonhole in each place, a rose or malmaison. The buttonholes should all be different colours. Name-cards are not used at a restaurant dinner (except in a private room), so the host must indicate the places where the guests shall sit.

Dinner passes quickly away, more particularly if the restaurant is one where there is an orchestra, and the hostess must take care that her party leaves the place in time for the commencement of the piece, for it is difficult to feel any interest in a play if one is not there from the beginning. Men

are always inclined to linger over their cigarettes at the end of dinner, but this is a case in which it is often necessary to speed the parting guest.

The journey from the restaurant to the theatre is generally made in cabs, the host paying for all, but a nicer way is to order *coupés* to call at the restaurant at a certain hour, as this obviates the necessity of paying at the time, thus preventing any discussion as to who shall pay. The host takes charge of the theatre tickets for the party. The hostess tells the guests how they shall sit, taking care to place the right people together. If she finds that she has not placed them well she can find some excuse for effecting a change during one of the intervals of the piece.

The hostess should take care that her guests have the best places if it is a box. Stalls are perhaps better than a box for a large party, as everyone can see almost equally well. If any friends who happen to be in the theatre come up to talk to the hostess between the acts, she should make them very welcome, and give them all the attention in her power. She should introduce them to the other occupants of the box, and make room for them to sit down and talk during the interval. It is pleasant to talk over the piece between the acts, but a large party should take special care not to talk during the performance; if people are not interested themselves, they should not spoil the pleasure of others.

At the end of the performance the

gentlemen help the ladies to put on their wraps, and the host looks after the carriages or cabs. A good way of finishing up the evening is to tell the *coupés* to call at the theatre at the end of the performance, so that all the guests are sent comfortably home. This adds a good deal to the expense, but it makes a nice wind-up to the evening.

## CLUB PARTIES

ONE of the problems of life for the bachelor lady is how to return the hospitalities she receives. Perhaps she lives in lodgings where the servants are overtasked or inefficient, and where the landlady will make a point of having "company" herself on the self-same day by way of showing her equality. Perhaps she lives in some out-of-the-way region, to which it is cruel to ask people to come, or she may possibly be the owner of a tiny flat up so many stairs that none but Alpine climbers could attempt it. She may be as happy as a queen in her lofty abode, but she cannot hold her court so near the skies. And even if her home is all she would desire it to be, and her servant as presentable as could be wished, she may not have the time to see after things as they require to be seen after if a successful entertainment is desired.

Forethought is the essence of entertaining. There is an evil little spirit who sits about somewhere—I don't know whether it is aloft or not—and watches over the fate of parties. It must be an alert hostess who can frustrate his endeavours to make everything go wrong. She must do her best to meet him at every point,



and her forethought must be as the nailed-up horse-shoe which keeps out the arrival of witches. She must see that she does not invite the wrong people together, or ask anyone who is likely to make things go wrong instead of right—above all things keeping out the apostle of “mad ventilation,” who likes to throw up windows just where they make a draught with a door, and create a disturbance every time anyone goes in or out. She must take care to have such an abundance of eatables that there is enough for all who come, yet not so much as to hang on hand for days afterwards, and she must see that the china-cupboard and glass-cupboard are both sufficiently stored, so that her maids shall not let people go short of anything because they have recently been indulging in a series of breakages. She must anticipate all the accidents that are liable to happen in a crowd, arranging her rooms so that there shall be no pitfalls and traps for the unwary, no foot-stools that can be fallen over, no great ottomans in the centre of an apartment, and nothing to block up a narrow doorway. And having done all this, she wants to have a new body and a new mind for the day itself—to be resourceful and clever in any emergency, to say the right thing to each person, to effect the necessary introductions, to be bright and smiling and pleasant from start to finish. To entertain well is real hard work—and this even when the hostess is sure of her servants, and knows that they are ac-

customed to their work, and will not lose their heads in any emergency.

A successful party cannot be achieved without time and thought, and it is not always possible for the "lady bachelor" to give her mind to all the little problems which import hard work into the lives of society ladies. Yet she does not want to go out for ever without making any return. She knows quite well what spiteful things are said of the people who indulge in this practice. "Who is that lady?" asked someone the other day of the writer; "I mean the one who goes round and round and round, and never asks anyone inside her doors in return." This terrible indictment did not make me think less of the lady, knowing as I did that she had an invalid mother in her house who could not endure the thought of company. It only made me think less of the speaker. Still the lady might have avoided such unpleasant remarks if she had not gone into society for a time, making her mother's illness the excuse.

I don't know that entertaining is very much good if you cannot ask people to your home. But a crowd is impossible in a tiny place, and you cannot receive without proper reception-rooms. So a club is a decided advantage to the lady bachelor, and she will find it very useful to belong to some association which gives her the opportunity of entertaining without having the trouble of attending to the details.

The choice of a club is important to

her, for she doesn't want to ask people out "so far" (to quote the oysters in *Wonderland*) without giving them a "pleasant treat" in return.

She wants, before all things, a club which is smart and agreeable, where the rooms are well decorated and the people are bright. She must write her notes of invitation about a fortnight beforehand, and send her guest-cards filled up with the names of hostess and guest, adding the date by way of a useful reminder. She must be careful to be in time, and to impress on the door-keeper that she is there, for fear that there shall be any mistake made, and she is wiser to keep as near the entrance as possible when she is expecting guests.

If she belongs to a Ladies' Club she should invite rather more men than ladies, by way of striking a balance; and she should be careful to invite men who are likely to be kind and helpful, used to society, and able to assist her in looking after her guests. She should at once effect introductions between all her guests, and also introduce any club members who are likely to interest them. She should offer tea to her visitors on arrival, and introduce gentlemen to ladies in order that they may take them in to tea.

The shy or unattractive visitor must be the special care of the hostess; bright people always get on in any company, but those who are lacking in self-confidence need special care, as do those who are strangers to the rest.

The hostess must be careful to discharge her duties to her own particular guests, not allowing herself to be lured away to entertain the guests of others until she has thoroughly looked after the people whom she has invited herself.

## MOURNING

THE subject of mourning is one that has been interesting to only too many of us of late, and a few words as to the regulation periods for wearing it will probably be useful to many of my readers. The desirability or non-desirability of the custom does not enter into the scope of the present article, so I will only say that there is scarcely any other subject on which so much can be said on both sides. The advocates of mourning reform tell us that the custom is extravagant and useless, and that the depressing effect of wearing black clothes is a bad thing when one is already under the influence of grief. On the other hand, there is a certain comfort to the mourner in her sombre attire—in the feeling that she is set apart from the world for a little time, and the sight of her mourning prevents people from inviting her to gaieties for which she has no heart. Perhaps the most feasible plea that can be advanced for this custom is the distraction which it provides for the bereaved one in the first moment of loss. It provides something which has to be done at once, and that is always a good thing when people are in sorrow. Grief must have its own way, and it is impossible for any set rules to be laid down as to what is good or bad

for the newly bereaved. Some like to speak of the lost one, whilst others cannot endure the sound of the once loved name—it is like the reopening of a wound. Some mourners crave for companionship, whilst others only desire to be let alone. We cannot make rules for people in grief, but there is no doubt that occupation of some kind is the best panacea for all sorrow, and that idleness is the sure road to indulgence in grief. The want of something to do is specially felt during the particular form of bereavement from which so many families have been suffering of late—I mean the death of some relative on the battlefield. “There is nothing to do,” says the mourner—no pious cares for the dead, no funeral service to be arranged for, no grave to deck with flowers. If these sad things bring any comfort with them, such comfort is denied to the woman who loses her husband or son in battle. She has special sorrows such as do not come with an ordinary loss—letters from her loved one, coming long after he has ceased to exist, and possibly her own letters returned through the post with “killed in action” on the envelope for all comment. The feeling of there being “nothing to do” comes with peculiar painfulness at such a time, and it is probably a good thing that the mourner has to rouse herself to order the black dresses which are to be the outward symbol of her grief.

I am not personally in favour of ordering black from a regular mourning department. I think it is much nicer

to get it from one's ordinary dress-maker. The gloomy appearance which the attendants of a mourning department think it correct to put on is very repugnant to the feelings of a person who is in deep grief. These people sometimes even seem to have a ghoulish enjoyment in seeing sorrow, and they delight in telling the mourner tales about other customers who have recently lost relatives in the war, and mentioning how much more upset they seemed. Mourning can be turned out much more quickly at a large establishment than at a private dressmaker's, but if time allows it I think it is much pleasanter to have one's black dresses made by the dressmaker one is accustomed to employ. If she has made for us for some time she will be sorry for us in our sorrow, and this will be much more soothing to the feelings than the sham sympathy of an utter stranger.

Many people are obliged to go to mourning warehouses because they do not know the right thing to order—when to wear crape, and how much of it, and when black should be exchanged for half-mourning. I have had a great many letters to ask for advice on these subjects of late, and have come to the conclusion that mourners are divided into two classes—those who want to wear mourning much longer than they need, and those who want to leave it off too soon. There seems to be no medium between the young lady who wants to go out hunting within a couple of months of her mother's death, and the



woman who thinks she ought to mourn for a year for her second cousin. The establishment of set periods for wearing mourning after various bereavements serves a useful purpose, and in my next chapter I will write down the different periods of mourning as at present observed in the hope that it may be useful to those who are in doubt.

## MOURNING—CONTINUED

A WOMAN scarcely realises how much time and thought she gives to her dress until circumstances oblige her to go into mourning, and then she is often surprised to find how large a part of herself she seems to put away with her trinkets and coloured clothes. There is no longer any reason to think about what she shall put on, or to try different effects before the glass. The sombre attire admits of little change, and she gets to put it on almost mechanically. After a time she grows reconciled to her sober array, and any kind of colour looks garish.

A widow's dress is fortunately not so unbecoming now as it used to be in the days of our grandmothers, when it was considered correct not only to wear a cap, but to hide all the hair underneath it, the little curl which would sometimes escape from its confinement winning for itself the name of the "widow's lock." The widow's cap has happily gone out of fashion altogether now; it was, after all, only a survival of the days when it was considered correct for all married ladies to wear caps. The picturesque dress remains, and it is so almost universally becoming that I have often wondered that women have not learnt a lesson from it on the value of length

of line and simplicity of style. A little time since, no ornament except jet was admissible for a widow; but now it is allowable to wear diamonds, even in the deepest mourning. One would not make a great display of jewellery; but diamond solitaire ear-rings and a diamond brooch, with perhaps a necklet of pearls on dressy occasions, form a great relief to the sombre attire.

There is a growing dislike to the regulation widow's bonnet, and young women seldom wear it for the traditional year and a day which used to be considered correct. If they order a widow's bonnet to start with, they seldom replace it by another one of the same kind. A plain black bonnet or a simple hat is usually adopted in place of the orthodox widow's bonnet with the long trailing streamers which are so sadly out of place in this workaday world. Nothing *outré* in the way of head-gear should be worn, but there is a kind of a hat with a turn-down brim which looks quite suitable to the deepest mourning.

With regard to the correct period for widows' mourning, it is proper to wear it for two years; the dress should be entirely covered with crape for the first year, gradually lessened during the next nine months, plain black being worn for the remaining three. Lawn collars and cuffs are worn for a little while, and after that a frill of chiffon in either black or white as preferred.

Evening dress for widows is prettier than it used to be, the introduction of

chiffon being a decided step in favour of grace. Once on a time a widow could only go out in a dull black silk which looked as if it were made out of hat-bands, but black chiffon makes as pretty a dress as the heart of woman can desire.

Mourning is worn for twelve months for a parent, plain black being worn all the time.

The same amount of time would be observed by a parent mourning a child.

The period of mourning to be observed for a step-mother depends upon the relations which have existed between her and her step-children. If she has been like a mother to them they would wear mourning for her for twelve months, but if she had only been married a short time before her decease, or if she had not lived with her step-children, six months would be sufficient time for mourning to be worn.

Six months is the correct period of mourning for a brother or sister (black for five months, half-mourning for a month), nine months for a grand-parent, three months for an uncle or aunt or nephew or niece; six weeks for a first cousin, and three for a second. A wife should mourn for her husband's relations as though they were her own, and this is a point in which etiquette and good feeling go together.

There is far less half-mourning seen than formerly. People do not make the gentle gradations from black to neutral tints and from grey to mauve which most of us can recall in the days of our

youth ; they are more apt to wear plain black all the time of their mourning, and then suddenly to start off in all the colours of the rainbow. I am inclined to think that the custom of our ancestors was more artistic than ours, but it may be that we have such a feeling of the shortness of life in these modern days that we do not like to spend too much of it in regret.

## TRAVELLING

IF windows had never been invented ! The man who first thought of them is responsible for much ! Unhappy person, who first evolved the idea of a sash that would go up or down ! It is wonderful that he can rest in his grave when he thinks of all the suffering he has inflicted on humanity. In hotels, in boarding-houses and in trains, the window is the continual bone of contention. What quarrels have taken place about windows ! What sarcasms they have given rise to, what bitter speeches they have evoked ! There never yet was a company of ten people in a railway carriage who all had the same ideas with regard to the management of the window, and many a long journey has been embittered by the struggles of the combatants.

There are two sets of people to be met with—those who love fresh air, and those who hate it like poison. The two can never be reconciled, and an unkind Fate ordains that a member of each opposing force shall be found in every railway carriage. The War of the Roses was short by comparison, the quarrels of the Guelphs and the Ghibelines fade into absolute insignificance. One can “spot” the two members of opposing factions as soon as one gets into the train. There is a sour-faced

woman who would want all the windows open in a hurricane, and a gruff old gentleman who would have objected to fresh air if he had been in the Black Hole at Calcutta. These two will quarrel as sure as fate, and with an energy which will last them the journey, however long it may be. They will not commence operations until the train has well started, when the first shot will be fired by a request from one or the other of them to open or shut the window, as the case may be. Their miserable fellow-passengers give a sigh; they know too well that this modest request is like pulling the string of a shower-bath, and that fearful things will ensue. The warfare commences; it lasts for the remainder of the journey, and it is difficult to say which of the combatants is capable of inflicting the most annoyance on the fellow-passengers. I am inclined to vote for the sour-faced woman. The old gentleman is a monster of obstinacy, whose conversation will resolve itself mainly into a series of grunts, but the elderly female will probably show herself to be a past mistress of invective and the possessor of a flood of eloquence. She will not talk *to* the old gentleman, but at him; she will talk to the fellow-passengers, and try to get them on her side. Her eloquence will only stop when she gets to her station, and even then she will depart, muttering bitter things about people who like to live in a hot-house.

Half the quarrels which arise in a railway carriage take place because



people don't realise the rule of etiquette which exists with regard to the window. The right of opening it belongs exclusively to the traveller who is sitting next to it, on the side facing the engine. The right to regulate the ventilation depends on him and no other, and if the way he exercises his powers do not happen to please you, you must appeal to him as civilly as may be. It is quite right that the management of the window should rest with him, as he is the person who will feel the greatest inconvenience if there is a draught. It is better not to ask a favour of a stranger if it can be avoided, and if it is necessary it should be done with all the politeness possible. One should say, "Excuse me, but I wonder if you would be so kind as to raise the window a little higher? I have been suffering from toothache, and am afraid of the draught" (or whatever the case may be). And, when the request has been complied with, there should be a grateful word of acknowledgment. I give this advice for what it is worth, and should only be too happy if I thought it might be followed in some isolated instances, but I greatly fear that the great window question is too important to be so lightly disposed of, the love of fighting over it being one of the strongest passions planted in the human breast.

There are other ways besides the one referred to by which people make themselves very unpleasant in a train. They put up odd luggage on the rack, so

that you live in terror of its coming down on your head; they leave boxes in the middle of the carriage, so that you have not enough room for your knees, and if they are so fortunate as to have secured a corner of the carriage, they will take up more than their fair share of room. Against all this bad treatment you have a right to protest, but always with civility, being careful to preface your request with "Would you mind?" Against the person who is "seen off" by a number of friends you have no remedy; there is nothing to do but sit still and endure. He blocks up the window till the very minute when the train is starting, shouting out parting messages the while, which let you into many of the secrets of his family history. The cruel heat of the stationary railway carriage is bad enough to endure without having a bulky body filling up the window, but the fellow-traveller can console himself with the thought which supported Damian in his day of horrible sufferings: "The day will not be a pleasant one, but it will end." People cannot continue to take leave of their friends for ever, and the train starting out of the station must at last bring an end to their adieux.

## COUNTRY-HOUSE VISITS

IT is always a little difficult to give people advice as to how they should comport themselves on a country visit, as every house has its own ways. In some houses people are slaves to routine, whilst in others rather rowdy behaviour is the rule. In some houses the meal-times are a sort of Procrustean bed, to which all engagements must somehow be fitted in, whilst in others the ideal of the hostess is to have a kind of Liberty Hall, with moveable feasts instead of meals. The visitor must find out the tone of the establishment for himself, and adapt himself to it as far as possible. But the modern hostess is not often exacting, and the more the house-guest goes his own way the better she is pleased. There are a few points of etiquette which are the same everywhere, so I had better confine my remarks to them. One custom is almost universal—the mention of the date of departure in the letter of invitation. This would not have been considered polite in ancient times, but we have now got to look at it as a matter of mutual convenience. “Can you come to us on the 1st, and stay for the ball on the 9th?” “We hope you can spend a week with us,” or, “We are looking forward to having you for the week-end.” These are the sort of

invitations one receives nowadays when time is so precious, and there are so many visits to be fitted in. Very long visits are paid in the Highlands, but the length of the journey makes a difference in this case.

Heavy luggage should not be taken on a visit, as it is inconsiderate to the servants of the house. Cane dress-baskets are convenient, as they are at once roomy and light, and there is a sort of long box with a flat top which is particularly good for travelling about with, as it will go under the seat in a railway carriage, and fit nicely into the back of a trap. If the top of the box is flat it is possible to put things on the top of it, and this is often a convenience when there is a good deal of luggage to be fetched from the station.

A hostess should always give a visitor sufficient time to unpack, and sufficient space for her belongings. That is an inconsiderate hostess who says, "You don't want to bother about unpacking yet, do you? for we want you to come out on the river now," and hauls her guest off for some long excursion at once, only bringing her in just in time to dress for dinner, when, perhaps, everything she wants to wear has to be dived for to the very bottom of the box. It is very nice to be out in the country, but no woman ever yet enjoyed looking at rustic scenery whilst she remembered that all her poor dresses were getting hopelessly creased in her box. Plenty of space is essential for one's belongings, and some hostesses are far

too fond of using their spare rooms as a lumber-room for their half-worn gowns. If a visitor is wise she will unpack as soon as possible, and be very careful to have her possessions neatly arranged, for it always takes a little longer to dress in a strange room in any case, and she will not like to be late for a drive or for meals, so as to keep other people waiting. A hostess is not bound to wait dinner for her house-guests as she must for guests invited for one evening only, but she generally endeavours to wait for them if possible, so they cannot be unpunctual without causing inconvenience.

Guests are supposed to amuse themselves in the morning, and in large country houses the hostess is not visible until lunch—the same time that the beauties appear on the scene. A society beauty seldom imperils her reputation by appearing at breakfast, an unbecoming time to most.

At luncheon the hostess generally asks the guests what they will do in the afternoon, and gives the orders for the carriages at once, writing them down on a slip of paper and giving them to the butler, who sees that they are transmitted to the stables. It is correct for a guest to say what she will do when her hostess invites her to choose, and a visitor should accept all attentions graciously, knowing that it is the hostess's pleasure to offer them. It is correct that a visitor should be offered the best seat in a carriage, and she is right to accept it without demur, but

she must be willing to cede her rights to a visitor who arrives at the house later, supposing that other things are equal. She should be more considered because she is the greater stranger, and the guest who has been in the house before her should suggest that the newcomer should have the box seat of the drag or the best place in the Victoria. The hostess cannot well suggest this. The guest must take the initiative in this case.

Country houses are full of cliques, and people soon choose their own companions. It is proper to be pleasant to everybody in the house, and, supposing one met someone with whom one had quarrelled, hostilities must be suspended for the time being. It would be most improper to carry on a quarrel in another person's house.

Every house has its own ways with regard to morning and evening greetings. People who belong to the smart set never shake hands night and morning—they would think it the most awful bore to go through this ceremony twice a day. They just say an inclusive good morning to the company, or give a little nod, or a little wave of the hand, and then they plunge into the serious business of choosing what they will have for breakfast. There are some families who never meet in the morning without as much greeting as if they had just come off a long journey, and here one would be thought very rude if one omitted the matutinal handshake.

In matters of this kind one must follow the ways of the house.

Conversation is welcome at dinner, but no one is expected to be brilliant at breakfast. It is the hostess's place to suggest retiring for the night, as the guest ought not to break up the party.



## TIPS

THE subject of the present article is interesting to most people some time or other in their lives, and I suppose there are very few whose minds have not been exercised upon this question. The subject presents special difficulties to the young and inexperienced, and I have known several young girls who have lost half the pleasure of a visit owing to the worry of not knowing what gratuities to dispense at its close.

“To tip or not to tip” is often a puzzling question to the old, and to a young girl on her first visit it is apt to be more so. Every autumn the patient ladies who write the etiquette columns in the ladies’ papers find themselves inundated with questions on this subject from people staying in country-houses in all parts of the kingdom. “How much to give and to whom?” is the burden of the song, and the writer is implored to give an answer with all possible expedition.

It is very difficult to answer questions of this kind in any definite fashion without personal knowledge of the circumstances and surroundings. A few rules can be laid down for general guidance, but beyond this a stranger cannot go. The principal factor in the

amount of the tip is the style of the house in which the visitor is staying, so that the gift is regulated more by the income of the host than by that of the guest. The amount of gratuities appears to increase with every year, and many people give gold who would once have been content with giving silver. The custom of individual tipping seems to be somewhat on the decrease, and many people give the head servant a sovereign or two on leaving, with instructions to divide it with the rest. This plan has both advantages and disadvantages, but it has the decided merit of saving trouble to the donor. It is sometimes difficult to be sure of seeing all the servants when one is leaving, and one does not always recollect their faces ; all trouble is saved by giving the money to one responsible person, though this deprives one of the pleasure of saying a pleasant parting word to each, and one may also feel a doubt as to whether the money will be fairly divided. The amount given depends partly on the length of the visit, and there are sometimes qualifying circumstances in the position or age of the guests—no one expects very much, for example, in the way of tips from young girls. In the Highlands people are often expected to make very long visits, say from a month to six weeks, and the tips must be in proportion ; a fortnight would be counted a good long visit anywhere in England, and a decent gratuity expected, but there is very little differ-

ence between the tips given for the week-end or the week. The heaviest tips given to any class of servants are bestowed on gamekeepers, who nearly always get gold ; fees to butlers come second in the list, ranging from five shillings to a sovereign, according to circumstances. Half-a-crown is the usual gratuity given to a coachman, but rich people would probably give more (ten shillings being the maximum). Young ladies very rarely give gratuities to men-servants, except any extra service has been received from them, but they give something to the coachman if he has driven them from or to the station. A girl would tip a man-servant if she was an invalid, and he had wheeled her about in a chair, or if he had carried her luggage upstairs or done anything which was out of the routine of his ordinary work.

In a house where no men-servants are kept gratuities are given to the housemaid who looks after the visitors' room, the parlourmaid coming second in the list. Most people give smaller gratuities to women-servants than they do to men, but I always think this seems a little unfair, as women-servants' wages are smaller than those of the men, so that a little money is very acceptable to them.

There is a good deal of histrionic power wasted on the bestowal of a tip. The visitor bestows it as if it were a sudden thought ; the servant invariably receives it with well-simulated surprise. There is also a certain sense of hurry

about the transaction which is apt to deprive it of much grace. Both visitor and servant feel as if they had entered into a conspiracy, as if it would be equally awkward for both parties if they happened to be caught in the act by the hostess. The latter has also some acting to do, as she has to pretend to be quite unconscious in the matter, though she knows perfectly well what is going on. So a tip is generally given with an absence of grace which would have made Lord Chesterfield weep; both visitor and servant are apt to wear a guilty look. A kind word should be said along with the gift, if opportunity permits of it. One may thank the servant for the care she has taken of us, supposing that she has been specially civil and obliging. The presence of a visitor gives a good deal of extra trouble to the servants, and it is only fair that it should be recognised. A good many funny stories have been told on the subject of tipping, but I have always thought there was a touch of cruelty in Sidney Smith's joke. Tipping had become a terrible institution in his day, no doubt, but it was a cruel trick to fill his pockets with oranges from the table, and to give one to each of the servants, who stood in a long line in the hall watching to see him go. A funny story, which has also a dash of the pathetic about it, was told me by a friend of mine, about a little girl who suffered from an abnormal amount of shyness. The poor child once left home on a short visit to some

friends in her own neighbourhood, and was duly provided by her mother with a half-crown to bestow upon the servant when she was leaving. The child arrived home with the half-crown—in fact, she had not had the courage to give it to the servant. “This will never do,” exclaimed the mother, “you must give the servant her tip! The best way will be for you to go and pay a call at the house within a few days, and take the half-crown with you, and you can put it into the servant’s hand when she opens the door.” The little girl started off; she took the half-crown in her hand to have it ready; she knocked at the door with a trembling hand! Alas for the vanity of human wishes! It was the mistress of the house who opened the door, and the little girl had put the money into her hand before she had realised what had happened. The child was exceptionally nervous, but there is no doubt that there are people in whom shyness is like a real disease, which renders them almost incapable of sight or movement for the time being. I do not suppose any of my readers suffer from shyness to such a distressing extent, but some of them can sympathise with the little heroine of my tale as they recall the days of their own childhood.

## AT THE SEASIDE

AT a first glance it might appear highly superfluous to give any advice about etiquette at the seaside, for the holiday season is no good at all to us if it does not give us a temporary relief from the shackles of society. Visiting is practically abandoned, and the card-case gets a well-deserved rest. And yet it is during the holiday time that little questions of etiquette are apt to arise, and people write many a letter to the Good Form column of ladies' papers to know how much they may talk to a travelling companion, or how they can avoid some very undesirable acquaintances at the seaside.

Theosophists tell us that there is a power of attraction in hate even stronger than that of love, and I have often felt that this was true when I have seen my own particular *bête noire* seated smilingly in the next stall at the theatre, or occupying the opposite seat to me at *table d'hôte*. The holiday season has trials of its own, and if we select the least-frequented place in the world, ten to one but we find ourselves next door to the unloved one—the person whom one would run a mile to avoid. "Of all men else I had avoided thee," was probably written after a seaside visit

paid under these distressing circumstances. A friend of mine was once staying in a tiny village on the sea coast when she made the dreadful discovery that the next cottage was occupied by a family with whom her hostess had quarrelled. That visit was one of the most dreadful experiences of her life. They met the family every day. On the pier, at the book-stall, at the library, at the station. There were three of the tabooed ones—a father, a mother, a daughter—and if they did not meet one they met the other. My friend used to let her hostess pass on in advance, and then bow as kindly as she could to the other people. But she was rather near-sighted, and she lived in terror lest she might really cut one of the three people by accident, and they should think she had done it on purpose. They were an auburn-haired family, which was a great assistance in recognising them, but the sight of a red head in the immediate foreground used to make her feel sick with anxiety. She would have whispered a pleasant word in passing, but the red-haired lady was deaf.

It is not many people who are called on to sustain such a trial as the one I have just described, but under any circumstances the undesirable acquaintance is a far greater trial in the country than he can ever be in town. Most people have a little outside fringe to their acquaintance—someone or other whom they never wished to know, or whom they know already too well. And how trying



it is if they find this particular person stationed in their immediate vicinity on a holiday, so that they have to run against him at every turn. Some people give themselves up to despair; they feel that fate has been too strong for them, and they weakly allow themselves to become very friendly with someone whom they have always intended to ignore as far as possible. But this is very unwise. One should not have one standard of behaviour for the country and another in town. It is very foolish to get intimate with people simply because they are at hand and one happens to be dull. I have known many people make an acquaintance during the holiday season which they have regretted all their lives.

Sometimes our holiday excursions bring us into contact with people whom we have always desired to know, or whose acquaintance, already made, we should very much like to extend. If they are above us in social rank, or if they happen to be celebrities, we must be careful to allow them to make the first advance. One needs a little tact under these circumstances. One is meeting the same people all day and every day, and sometimes they may be glad of one's company and sometimes they may wish to keep to their own party. Or again, it may suit them to be very pleasant at the seaside but they may not wish to add to the list of their acquaintances in town. All questions of the renewal of the intercourse must proceed from the person who is the highest

in rank. It would not do for the commoner to be the first to ask the lady of title for her town address, nor would the young musical student offer to call on the celebrated singer without invitation. The married lady invites the unmarried one to call on her, and the elderly single lady makes the first advance towards the young girl.

Pleasant acquaintances, as well as unpleasant ones, are sometimes made when travelling, and the holiday season often brings us into contact with delightful companions whom otherwise we might never have met. There is a certain amount of license allowed in travelling, and it is only under-bred people who put on haughty airs and look on every stranger as an object of suspicion. The man of the world is known by his easy and affable behaviour, by the way in which he accommodates himself to any company. It is only the outsider who looks at his travelling companion or hotel neighbour as though he were a bitter enemy, only the woman who is not sure of herself who thinks that her neighbour has evil intentions if he asks her to pass the salt. People who belong to the same world are quick to recognise one another, and the discovery of a mutual acquaintance often serves as a pleasant link between persons who have met by chance. Whether the friendship is resumed in after days depends on circumstances. The time to suggest such a thing would be just before leaving, when an interchange of cards would

be effected. A person would say, "I hope we shall meet in town. Don't forget to give me your card before we part," or "I hope we shall see something of you. I must let you know where I am to be found."

## AT A FOREIGN WATERING-PLACE

VERY few hints are needed with regard to behaviour at an English watering-place, but English people are sometimes at fault when they pay their first visit to a foreign one. The Casino is the centre of attraction, and although it is not always necessary to be dressy by day it is absolutely essential to be smart in the evening. The British ideal of a holiday resort as a place in which one may wear one's oldest clothes finds no acceptance abroad; there are toilettes for every occasion, and carefully regulated amusements for old and young. The English evening at the sea, with its entire absence of anywhere to go or anything to do, would be considered the height of dulness by the *habitués* of the tiniest French watering-place; they could not imagine a holiday without a Casino and a band. Whether the ideal corresponds with our own notions or not we should endeavour to conform with it when we are abroad; we should not tramp about in tailor-mades when our lively neighbours are disporting themselves in *fête*-dresses, for fear we may add a fresh type of fearful female to the French novels of the future.

Every place has its own peculiar ways,

and we should endeavour to adapt ourselves to them during our visit. In Dieppe nobody worries about dress in the daytime, but everyone is exceedingly gay at night. At Ostend the morning is the dressy time, and extraordinary toilettes are to be seen, both in the water and beside it. In Trouville the dress is chiefly regulated by what is going on at the Casino. The dresses are beautiful at all times, but more elaborate on certain days. People are apt to affect a certain carelessness in attire in places where they are taking a "cure," whilst gaming-tables have a tendency to bring out the most brilliant toilettes. English visitors have to take their courage in both hands at places like Monte Carlo, and wear dresses and wraps out of doors which they would scarcely dare to appear in at the opera if they were in England.

"*Fête-dress*" is a word for which we have no English equivalent, but it exactly expresses the right kind of dress for a Casino. It does not want to be grand and stately, only to be fresh and gay. Foulard is better than broché, and muslin than either; there should be the prettiest of gloves and shoes, and the airiest of *chapeaux*. The hat must be firmly secured if its wearer intends to dance, for it is not correct to take off one's hat at a Casino. A fan is a necessity, whether it is a concert-night or a dance, for all gambling-rooms are hot, and a ruffle of some kind can be carried over the arm, to be slipped on when one takes a turn on the terrace. Cloaks and

umbrellas should be left with an attendant at the door directly one arrives, as nothing looks uglier than to see people walking about at a Casino encumbered with luggage. There are one or two points of etiquette to be remembered in connection with "the tables." There is no harm in standing for a while to watch the players, but one must never sit down at the tables unless one is playing. It is not allowable to take up the space unless one is taking part in the proceedings. It is better not to recognise friends when they are playing, as many people are superstitious, and they think that a word spoils their "luck." If a lady goes with a party to a Casino it is always better for her to keep her own ticket for her cloak, as otherwise she is not independent. She may want her cloak to go out on the terrace in, or she may wish to leave before the men of the party, and if she were to ask them for the ticket whilst they were playing she might be told that the interruption had made them forget the particular system on which they had decided to play that evening.

A lady may cross the room by herself at a Casino, but she could not loiter about alone, or walk on the terrace unaccompanied.

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